US Chinook helicopter shot down in Iraq; 13 killed

Story below, Col. 1

'Jueteng' alive but task force dead

By Christian V. Esguerra in Manila and Melvin Gascon and Marchelo Lucas Rivrivo in Cebu

ITAPPEARS that tough-talking Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr. may have eaten his

(LIFTING, A11)

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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WHAT'S INSIDE

- Manila cracks down on illegal water taps METRO/A24
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House tells SC: We are not under you

88 lawmakers stand by Davide impeachment

By Carlito Pablo and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE HOUSE of Representatives has a message for the Supreme Court: Back off.

By 4 p.m. today, the House will formally respond to the high court's status quo order regarding the impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

"Simply put, we will tell the Supreme Court that it has no jurisdiction over the House," said Rep. Eulen Supiter (LDP-Bohol), a member of the House legal team.

But Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. adopted a less confrontational approach. He said the House's submission of its 20-page "Special Appearance with Manifestation" was proof that the chamber was strictly adhering to the constitutional process.

"We are not defying the Supreme Court," De Venecia said. "We are complying with the Constitution's mandate for us to respond."

The House will submit its reply, through its legal counsel, even as anti-impeachment congressmen continued their opposition (signature-gathering) campaign, in an attempt to bring the number of signatories to the second complaint against Davide below 76, or one-third of the House membership. Lakas party officials claimed 16 of their 37 colleagues who had supported the complaint had already agreed to withdraw their signatures.

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye urged the House to take a second look at the Commission on Audit's report on the disbursement of the Judiciary Development Fund (JDF) at the committee level, to break the impasse between the House and the Supreme Court.

In an interview with RMN radio, Bunye said the COA report should provide the key to breaking the impasse because

(HOUSE, A12)

JOAN SOLIMAN

THANKS FOR REFUND. COA's all-female team of auditors was the one that uncovered the overcharging by Meralco and power cooperatives. From left: Edna Sakupdan, Elvira Agustin, Raquel Gorgonio, Magdalena Soriano, Angelita Aquino, Lady de Leon, Herminda Vallor Fabrea and Cheryll Apalisoc. They are the Civil Service Commission's Pag-Asa ng Bayan Awardees this year.

Meet 'Powerpuff Girls' of COA

By Volt Contreras

CALL them the "Powerpuff Girls" of the Commission on Audit, whose keen eye for accounting distortions and resolve to unveil being refused and denied by the businessmen they scrutinize led to the saving of vicentos of the public over overcharging electric companies.

If you are already getting or about to get a refund to your electric bill, you largely owe it to the eight-member audit team that reviewed Manila Electric Co.'s books in 1995. The all-female team found that the giant power distributor had wrongly included the income tax among the costs recoverable from consumers.

Then there's Cheryll Apalisoc, who single-handedly uncovered the malpractice committed by at least four electric cooperatives in the provinces in computing the controversial purchased power adjustment (PPA).

The government, through the Civil Service Commission, saluted these silent whistle-blowers in September

(NEXT, A3)

Impeach rap raises issue of abuse of power by House

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE IMPEACHMENT complaint lodged against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. is a trailblazing constitutional case in more ways than one.

It is not only the first time that the Chief Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court has been impeached. It follows in just three years the impeachment of Joseph Estrada, the first Filipino President ever to stand trial at the Senate.

Thus, we are witness to two impeachment cases being brought against heads of two key institutions of Philippine democracy—the presidency and the judiciary—within a space of three years, reflecting the fragility and instability of our constitutional system based on the principle of checks and balances.

The rapid sequence of impeachment cases involving key institutional heads illustrates the capricious use of impeachment as a constitutional instrument to remove officials accused of abusing of power, corruption and betrayal of public trust.

The capriciousness is emphasized by the fact that two impeachment cases have been initiated against Davide within a space of one year.

The second case, alleging corruption in the disbursement of the Judiciary Development Fund, came on the heels of the dismissal by the House of Representatives of the first complaint, impeaching Davide and seven other Supreme Court justices for the court's intervention in installing then Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as President following the collapse of the Estrada administration

(IMPEACH, A11)

So where's our money? ask court employees

By Carlito Pablo and Christian V. Esguerra

WHERE did the money go?

The executive committee of the 25,000-strong Alliance of the Court Employees Associations of the Philippines yesterday said they regretted having been noted into "mere pawns" in the impeachment crisis, when all they wanted was to know how the controversial Judiciary Development Fund was being spent.

If their demand would lead to the impeachment of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., then so be it, the Acesp executive committee said in a statement.

"We should subject himself to investigation because it's the only way for us to learn the real score about the JDF," Acesp president Jose Dante Guerrero told the Inquirer.

But one anti-impeachment congressman, Liberal Party president Florencio Abad of Batanes, said the real score had already been composed by the Commission on Audit, and it was positive for court employees.

Citing COA documents, Abad said the high court under Davide was able to increase by "thrice or even more" the cost of living allowance (Cola) due to employees from the JDF between 2000 and 2003, compared to the 1995-1999 period.

Abad pointed out this detail amid re-

(SO WHERE, A12)

Crisis provides opportunity for reunions

By Carlito Pablo, Jhanee Napallacan, *PDN* Kathryn Herrera and Nash B. Madava *PDN* Mercedes Rorres

OUTPOURINGS of support for Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. continued nationwide yesterday from past friends and present colleagues, as well as complete strangers young and old.

Former dorm mates and fraternity brods of brothers Hilario III and Ryan Davide from the University of the Philippines-Diliman said they had found a new reason to get together, more meaningful than the occasional nights out and reunions.

These pals from the early 1980s have joined civil society drives—text and e-mail brigades, website setups, boycott of San Miguel Corp. products—to defend the Chief Justice from his tormentors.

"Berjecks" Batch '81, who shared the third floor of the UP Kalayaan Residence Hall for freshmen, are rallying around Hilario III or "Junjun," who occupied Room No. 313.

Junjun is legal counsel for younger

(DAVIDE, A12)

US helicopter shot down by missile in Iraq, killing 13

BAIJI, Iraq—Guerrillas shot down near Baghdad on Sunday a US transport helicopter carrying troops on a recreation break, killing at least 13 in the bloodiest attack on US occupiers since Saddam Hussein's rule crumbled in

The crippled Chinook crashed on a farm near the village of Baiji, south of Fallujia, a stronghold of anti-US resistance 80 km west of Baghdad.

"Currently 13 soldiers are KIA (killed in action) and some 20 wounded," a US Army spokesperson told Reuters.

US military helicopters circled above. Other helicopters and US Humvee vehicles were parked around the wreckage.

A US spokesperson said two Chinooks had been heading for Baghdad airport with troops on a rest and recreation break. He said the downed helicopter, carrying 30 people including five crew, had been "shot down by an unknown weapon."

A witness in Fallujia, Dawoud Suleiman, said: "There were two American helicopters. They fired a missile at one and missed, and then they hit the other, which crashed and caught fire."

Some Iraqis were jubilant. "The Americans are pigs. We will hold a celebration because this helicopter went down—a big celebration," said school farmer Saadoun Jamila near the crash site.

"The Americans are enemies of mankind," he added.

US troops told journalists to leave the area and confiscated their film as another military medical helicopter with a Red Cross sign on its side landed, sending up clouds of dust from the dry scrub land.

It was the third time guerrillas had

(US HELICOPTER, A6)

US SOLDIERS rush to the crash site of a Chinook helicopter, which was shot down on Sunday at a stronghold of anti-US resistance in Iraq. REUTERS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2001
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon, Northern Luzon will experience rainy and cool weather during weekend. The rest of Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms, while Visayas and Mindanao will be mostly cloudy to partly cloudy.

MILF offers to hunt down JI

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front, long suspected of coddling the Jemaah Islamiyah, has offered to assist the government in its manhunt against operatives of the regional terrorist group who are believed to be in the country.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu yesterday said they are only awaiting the final guidelines of a joint communique that would authorize the MILF to go after cronies such as the Abu Sayyaf bandit group and the JI in Mindanao.

"We're very willing to help," he told the Inquirer. "We need only an assurance that we would not get into trouble once we make our move."

The military has identified its counterpart for operations of the JI while President Macapagal-Arroyo has declared as the top threat in the country's national security.

The JI, believed to have links to the al-Qaeda terror network of Saudi-born Osama bin Laden, seeks the establishment of a radical Pan-Islamic nation across Southeast Asia.

Recent arrests of top JI leaders in the Philippines have exposed the group's growing presence in the country.

A 23-year-old Indonesian suspect Taufik Refki, the alleged JI paymaster in the Philippines, was arrested in Cotabato City on Oct 2. Refki is allegedly the JI number two man in the Philippines.

The arrest led government forces to an alleged JI hideout in Cotabato City, where they recovered bomb-making equipment and radical Islamic literature.

Refki is believed to have trained under JI bomb expert Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi.

Under the communique prepared in May last year, the MILF would be part of a joint action group that would work for the "isolation and neutralization of criminal elements and other syndicated crimes operating in Mindanao," Kabalu said.

The group will include Undersecretary Avelino Razon, Deputy Director Gen. Victor Ela, Philippine National Police chief for operations, and the MILF's Abdul Dataya and Sulaiman Piparacan, the spokesperson said.

Kabalu said the MILF's offer to track down JI members was part of his group's commitment to the ongoing peace negotiations with the government.

The military said some 60 other JI militants, most of whom are believed to be Indonesians, are on the loose in Mindanao, where a massive manhunt has been launched.

Heading Arroyo's peace talks, both the 1987 and the Armed Forces were ostensibly cautious not to mention the MILF in their operations against the JI even if the nonetheless group has been composed of trailblazing the Islamic terrorist network.

Police and military intelligence officials had earlier admitted that the JI operated training schools inside the MILF's Camp Abubakar which was overrun by government troops in 2000.

One Army official noted that in every major MILF camp was a "community of Indonesians" believed to be schools where JI terrorists were trained on terrorist tactics.

Kabalu admitted that there are hundreds of Indonesians in Mindanao, particularly in Davao, General Santos, Sarangani, and South Cotabato.

But it was unlikely, he said, they were JI terrorists because most of them are non-Muslims who have been staying in the country for at least 10 years.

As Oil developed, President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to visit this week non-town villages in Pikit, North Cotabato to inaugurate one of the power and development projects aimed at uplifting the socio-economic lives of farmers in Mindanao.

The President will inaugurate and open a bridge and a siphon project of the Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project (MMIP) in Barangay Environ.

In Davao City which she visited earlier, the President issued a statement saying she would unveil in 2002 another P5 billion infrastructure package for less-developed areas in Mindanao. MDR, Edwin G. Bernardo, DW, Mindanao Bureau

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Lamitan 'hero' not wanted in GenSan

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Capt. Ruben Gatochian, one of the acknowledged heroes in the controversial siege of Lamitan, Basilan, was declared "persona non grata" by the city council here on Thursday for his alleged involvement in a shooting incident.

Gatochian, commander of the 11th Scout Ranger Co. under the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion deployed in Palimbang town, Sultan Kudarat, has been barred from this city after he, together with his men, entered the Bula police precinct here early Monday morning.

Gatochian allegedly roughed a son of a former local court judge and his two companions in front of police men. He was also pointed their firearms on policemen on duty who tried to allay city police headquarters for reinforcements.

Councilor Franklin Dalal Jr., one of the proponents of the measure, delivered a strongly worded privilege speech denouncing the excesses committed by Gatochian and his men.

"I consider the incident as the worst case scenario committed by the Scout Rangers against the civilians. Instead of being the protector of civilians, the soldiers are now the ones harming the civilians," Dalal said.

The resolution was unanimously approved by the city council.

Gatochian was relieved on Thursday as company commander of the 11th Scout Ranger Co. and was placed under the custody of the 6th Infantry Division in Camp Aweng, Cotabato City, Maguindanao.

Meanwhile, Senior Supt. Jorge Segismundo, city police director, said that criminal charges for Direct Slight against Gatochian and his men before the Office of the Ombudsman Mindanao.

Segismundo said they expect the Ombudsman to resolve the case within a couple of weeks.

Police on duty at the Bula precinct were quizzing the statements of Pedro Serrano V and his son, Pedro Serrano Jr. when Colonel Ong and his men arrived and took Gatochian heading the team.

The victims had been invited by the police to give their accounts of an incident involving a brawl between Sgt. Edwin Romero and a certain Arnold Sotto.

Antonio and his friends intervened the incident in the Malungon Auto Bar but were not a party to it.

Segismundo, however, assured residents here that the incident will not affect the cordial relation between the police and military.

Brig. Gen. Alexander Yano, chief of the Army's 601st Infantry Brigade here, said reports that because of the incident, the entire Scout Ranger Battalion was pulled from his unit effective Friday.

The 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion, which was under the operational control of the 601st Brigade, was deployed in Palimbang town in July to help track down Abu Sayyaf leader Khaddafy Janjalani and his men.

Yano said he was deeply saddened by the incident. "But was an unfortunate and isolated incident. I assure you this will not happen again," Yano said. Agustin T. Zarate, DW, Mindanao Bureau

Bigger rice, corn harvests make up for earlier deficits

By Norman Bordadora

A THIRD-quarter rebound in rice and corn harvests has reversed the deficit in the first two quarters brought about by typhoons, the Department of Agriculture announced yesterday.

Statistics from the Bureau of Agriculture showed that the third quarter rice output of 2.43 million metric tons (MT) was 20.6 percent higher than the 2.02 million MT harvested in the same period last year.

The latest projection that the entire 2003 palay production would exceed last year's by almost 190,000 MT.

Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. said government support in terms of fertilizer subsidy, ample availability of hybrid seed certified seeds for use, and the timely release of calamity funds had more than paid off.

The El Niño phenomenon that clipped the first semester palay harvest, resulting in a decline of 7.1 percent from its 2002 levels.

But Secretary Lorenzo said corn exceeded its counterpart by the production target of 5.4 percent in the third quarter with an anticipated increase of 30.1 percent in the fourth quarter, or up to 1.12 million MT from last year's same period output of 858,200 MT.

This fourth quarter output would mainly be 2003 contribution to surpass last year's by almost 290,000 MT, Lorenzo said.

Super typhoons

Two super typhoons, namely Huma et and Nida, hit rice-producing areas in Cagayan Valley and the Cordilleras last July and August, diminishing the expected output.

Because of increased harvest in the third quarter, the bureau is projecting the outlook for the last quarter of 2004 to be bright for both corn and un-milled rice, as their outputs are expected to improve by yet another six percent over this year's levels.

In addition to this, Lorenzo said, the GMA ("Growing Money-making Agri") Rice Program under Director Fiona Mahfouzan, has embarked on a "quick turnaround" strategy encouraging farmers to plant immediately after their last harvest.

The agriculture chief also said to "the growing numbers of farmers taking up modern technology, achieving three to four times more output per per hectare. "He cited a farmer in Occidental Mindoro who harvested 297 cavans or 14.8 MT of palay per hectare from his irrigated farm."

Average output in previous years stood at 60 cavans/ha and 40 cavans per hectare.

"Corn increase in every production site also is the result of the intensified seed dispersal initiative under the GMA Corn Program since early 2003, allowing corn yields, notably of the white variety, to improve to 1.91 MT per hectare," Lorenzo said.

Mutineers' release hailed; leaders' prosecution urged

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. ROLANDO Biazon said yesterday Malacañang's order releasing 133 military officers and men who had been "misled" into joining the July 27 Oakwood mutiny would "serve the cause of justice," even as he urged the government to focus on the prosecution of those behind the illegal action.

"This release would also address the alleged betrayal of the agreement forged between Secretaries [Ray] Cimatu and Ermita of the Alliance going who were held responsible for the July 27 incident," Biazon said. "The agreement to surrender had included the release of the mutinous soldiers who had merely followed orders.

Two weeks ago, Biazon said he visited the 525 detainees of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who were involved in what the Bantay Commission described as a coup d'etat against the Macapagal administration.

The senator, a former AFP chief of staff, went to the various military camps where the detainees were held. He also visited the alleged leaders of the coup led by Lt. (s.g.) Antonio Trillanes IV Camp Aguinaldo.

In a phone interview, Biazon said many of the detainees were enlisted personnel who had been merely following their superiors' orders.

Maraos sa diskarte

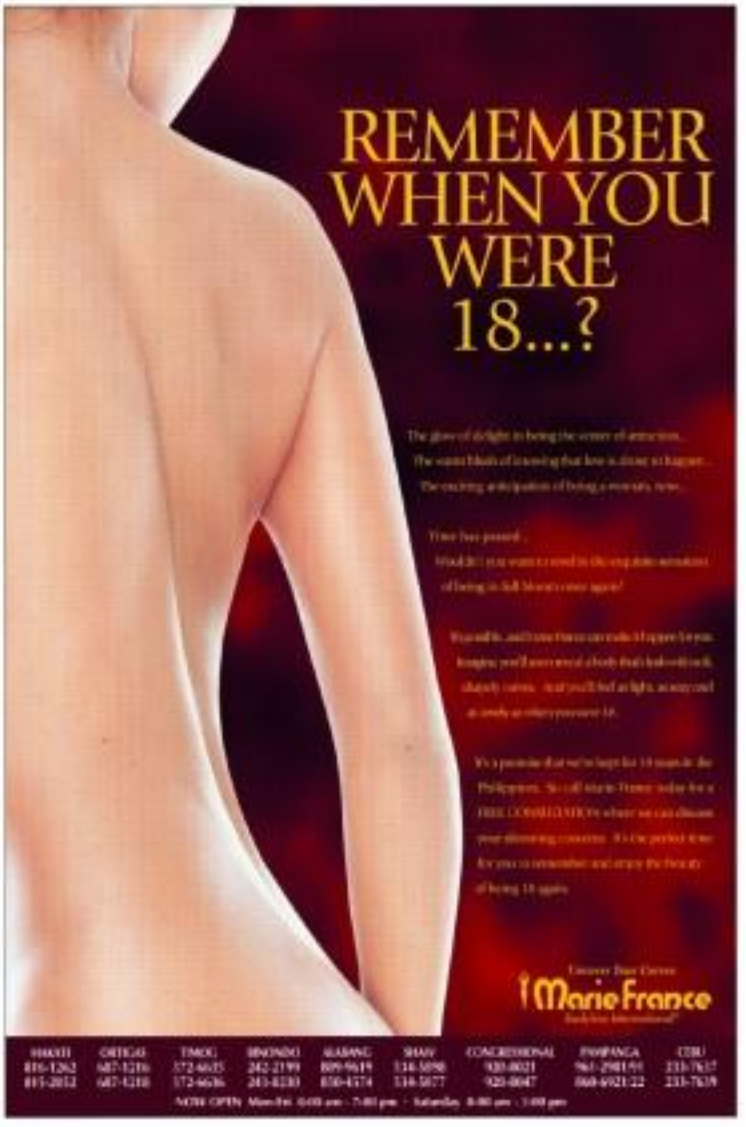
He said some of them told him they were told after their camps opposed to diskarte ruled by the mutineers at the Oakwood Hotel in Makati City where the Magdalo group stands in stand.

Biazon said after visiting the camps, he told Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita about the need for the AFP to quickly conclude its investigation into the detainees' involvement in the uprising.

He said the government should start prosecuting the leaders of the mutiny, noting those officers held "positions of command and responsibility were then subordinates."

But the senator also urged relatives of the officers and men who may be found innocent to be patient so the authorities conclude their investigation.

President Macapagal-Arroyo the other day ordered the release of 133 AFP officer and men found to have been "deceived and misled" into participating in the mutiny.



INFOTECH

Editor Leo Magno

Samsung turning serious tech player

By Leo Magno

FREEZING rain and wind in tossing Turkey served as a unassuming backdrop as South Korean Samsung Electronics and one player in four top economies not just against arch-rival Sony Corp. of Japan but also against information technology giants such as Microsoft, Nokia, Intel, Dell, Apple and IBM.

In a global presentation held in the Turkish capital, Samsung vice chair and CEO Yong Hwa said the company is maximizing on business portfolio into four synergic areas: the home market, the office market, the mobile world and the technology components sector. The company is also targeting synergies between areas in home networking, wireless communications and mobile solutions with new products under these sectors.

That's announcement came a day before Sony announced that it would be moving 20,000 jobs, or 13 percent of its workforce, in the next three years. Sony had been trailing Samsung has been hitting busy when it came—capitalizing on the Japanese company's slowdown—and so late entry into the flat, widescreen TV market. So, the South Korean company is keeping in eggs in several baskets, particularly with Sony as the biggest customer and global losses and its plans to go after Sony and Samsung will establish a joint venture based in South Korea that will mean new with-generation TFT-LCD panel displays for flat TVs, signaling Sony's admission that it needs help in the flat-panel market.

Samsung has also been keeping in eggs in several baskets on hand, sign-wise, manufacturing a full plethora for both CDMA and GSM mobiles, producing both LCD and plasma TV, memories making PDAs based on Symbian, Palm and Windows platforms, and selling hard-drive-less printers while producing semiconductors for Intel competitors as well.

Behind the impressive numbers that push a Samsung's uncanny ability to stay afloat while others are sinking. Samsung is coming from a net profit of $1.4 billion in 2002, up from $1.1 billion in 2001. That has enabled the company to post its $2 billion dream of being a top-ten player for 2005, or more than 30 percent of its net profit for the year. Driving Samsung's innovative engine, said CEO Yun, are 1,890 Ph. D. holders.

The company's aggressiveness is also buoyed up by the fact that Samsung has been named by Interbrand as the fastest growing brand in the world for 2002 and 2003. The company's brand value rose from $6.3 billion in 2002 to $10.8 billion this year, according to figures released by Interbrand to help.

Samsung CEO Yun probably summed up the reason behind the company's inwards and willingness to mix it up with IT giants in a dash showing Samsung's profit level. The company is now ranked 29th in the Fortune Global 500 table. In the industry, near only to Microsoft and ranked by IBM and Nokia in third and fourth places. Placing the company side by side with such technology giants shows how Samsung now is not no longer just a consumer electronics player but is serious digital lifestyle player as well.

Fujitsu announces job cuts at Philippine software arm

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

At least 70 employees shedded at a software services subsidiary of Fujitsu Philippines Inc. (FPI) were laid off as part of an extensive program being implemented this year, a top official told InfoTech.

"You're to understand that a large part of our FPI's business is exports. The [software] export bubble is down for the past years," said FPI president Felipe Mendoza.

He said that cost-cutting projects have declined due to the lingering recession in the US economy and noted that there had been a 75-percent reduction in US-based outsourcing projects since 2000.

Many of the job cuts in Fujitsu's Systems International, Fujitsu Philippines' software services subsidiary were structural changes, the executive said.

FPI started offering voluntary early retirement packages to employees who had been with the company for at least 10 years.

To date, close to 70 employees have availed of the program, the executive said.

FPI had also started outsourcing "non-essential and clerical services" to a third party which caused 60 to 70 employees to lose their jobs.

Mendoza said that the decision to let go a lot of employees was nothing but "painful" for the company.

"This is the first time in more than 20 years that the company has cut jobs," the executive said, noting that the company would have done this in 2002, if not for prospects to turn around.

From those to a 1,000 employees, Mendoza said that the total FPI employee headcount has now declined.

"Technology, we should have reduced our headcount last year but we were hoping that the US software market would improve," Mendoza said. "But people are saying that the situation will only improve until after the US elections in 2004."

To soften the blow of the job cuts, FPI has set up an employment service for ex-employees. Apart from helping them get over the "transition" experience, the program has been helping the former FPI employees find new jobs since January, Mendoza said.

Mercury is among the top software houses in the Philippines, employing hundreds of engineers.

Mendoza said that the subsidiary's experience with cuts has induced, as many Philippine software houses are also cutting jobs since last year.

Meet 'Powerpuff Girls' of COA

From page A1

vault, citations and cash awards. But in one of them (COA Resolution 99-001), the auditors reward anyone whenever plain 'brownouse or friends in their neighborhood or parish approach them to say "Thank you for the refund, ha."

The Members-only team earned their prize's CEC Pag-ibig Bayanihan Award. There were also awards for Agustin, Raquel Gorgonio, Edna Salagubang, Lady de Leon, Magdalena Soriano, Lita Aquino, Lourdes Moore and Stella Villena. The group shared a cash award of P50,000 and a trophy. Each received a gold medal.

Apallisor was honored with the Presidential Dangal ng Bayan Award, which includes a cash prize of P100,000, a two-night stay at the Manila Hotel, and a one-rank promotion that will add P200 to her monthly paycheck.

All that for a few years' work clawing on the bravery and lustre of the public utilities and government offices, which COA is mandated to review. COA underlashes an audit whenever utilities ask for a rate increase.

The job inevitably entails "pressure," so you it mildly. Apallisor, who earns a P2,889-a-month room in Sampaloc, Manila and drives a P50,000-second-hand car, said that at one point during her audit of a power cooperative, she was offered "guardian allowance" so that she would go easy on the co-op's books. "Is that all?" her giggling colleagues asked.

The CEC said Apallisor stayed late in the office poring over the figures of the following to-ops and recommended that they give some money back to consumers: Iloilo Power and Light Co. (refund: P5.13 million), Negros Occidental Power Cooperative (P6.09 million), Cebuanas Lighting Co. (P4.07 million) and Zambales II Electric Cooperative (P251,964).

The to-ops all "deviated from the formula" set by the Energy Regulatory Commission in computing the PBR, by including certain operational expenses in the computation, she told the bosses. Her memorandum, though, an still pending with the ERC for implementation.

Apallisor also recalled that one to-op's officials, who she refused a local politician, once approached COA Chair Guillermo Carague to have her findings withdrawn at the last minute.

"They even claimed that they were actually 'close' to our chair. But later I learned that our chair never bowed down to any. So, let's all get rid of this rotten system of corruption," so they were not able to do anything [about my report]," she said.

But outside her work on the power companies, Apallisor said one of her scariest moments as auditor was having to deal with a city official in Mindanao, who literally asked how much money it would take for her to look the other way. "He was cleaning his gun right in front of me" when he popped the question, she said in Filipino.

For the Members audit team, Agustin said her group learned a few key "dos" and "don'ts" for auditing the firms we "are supposed to."

But it was after their reimbursement claims were released and counted by Members to the tune of P1.5 million, representing Mercedes every-charges since 1999.

Solidarity really approached the team with an offer or veiled threat, Agustin said, "but almost every day the team was highly motivated and in the media, especially with the Joint newspaper columnist] questioning COA's capabilities."

The solidarity road ultimately, she recalled, dished COA "for not being aware of globally accepted principles" in setting utility rates and "for sticking to our archaic ways."

"For us it hurt the least, because all we did was follow our rules," Agustin said.

Agustin said that a few days before the team released its report, Meralco officials showed up at the COA office, saying they were just wondering if the team had really seen all the pertinent documents.

The team was invited to go over supposedly new material at the Meralco office on Ortigas Avenue in Pasig. "But aliens are never in their conference room, they brought in stacks and stacks of folders, all of which we had already seen before," Agustin said. The team members then exchanged knowing looks.

In hindsight, Agustin and her colleagues now think that it was Meralco's way of saying: "What more can we do for you? Should we go down on our knees and cry?"

Like Apallisor, the auditors also shrugged off the banks of Mercedes had their own private jokes about how rich they would actually be if only they had opened themselves to bribes.

Almost all of them still take the journey to report for work. Financial she and her share of the gas money to pay up debts, while another proudly showed off her current source of hope: a crocheted yellow shirt from Shoemart.

"My own message on case toward me about accepting money so I could send him to a better school," wrodded another. Still another said she once considered switching careers after examining government-owned corporations and found that their office secretaries and janitors were receiving bigger take-home pay than she was.

But ultimately everyone in the team invoked the law of karma and fear of God.

"Initially, you really don't get much thought to it when you're only doing COA's duty," Agustin said. "But later you still realize on the flipside itself, like realizing that, you know be careful in your computation because it's money to be returned to the people. It becomes a commitment."

Asked what kept her to the straight and narrow path, Apallisor said: "I think if you really love your job, you will see every detail of what should be done."

Did it help a lot that they were all women? "Well, we don't look inline shirting and that's perhaps one reason we were really uncorrupted and I'm the people being audited," Agustin said and smiled. "But in the end they were always surprised by our [hard-hitting] reports."

And besides, "[so] it the narrower you really be invited to beer houses where things might be resolved over over a few bottles?" Dionesse, almost in chorus, agreed with a grin.

'Dear Judge,' court employees reply to 'Wimpy' letter

EMPLOYEES of the Caraballese Sur courts have taken up the cudgels for Rep. Felix William Fuentebella, co-sponsor of the impeachment complaint against Supreme Court chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., who has found himself in the eye of the storm.

Members of the Court Employees' Association of Camarines Sur e-mailed the bayonne in reply to the letter to Fuentebella from IFTC Judge Nile Malanyaon of Pili, Camarines Sur.

In his letter, Malanyaon chastised Fuentebella for his action against Davide. Here is the court employees' reply:

Dear Judge Malanyaon,

We write in behalf of the court employees of Camarines Sur who are responsible for putting our beloved Rep. Felix William Fuentebella in the position of the impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

We think it is outside your Representative Fuentebella, or Wimpy as you like to call him, should be castigated by you for initiating the impeachment complaint against Mr. Davide without finding out first how it all started and the circumstances that forced the hand of the House of Representatives.

As you may know by now, it was us, the Camarines Sur court employees, who first complained to Rep. Fuentebella in June 2002 about our declining cost of living allowance (COLA) which is taken from the now controversial Judicial Development Fund (JDF).

Rep. Fuentebella immediately brought our complaint to the floor of the House, saying we're trying to the first our problem. The sum here the House none seems to be alleged irregularities in the disbursement of the JDF. At the time[,] persons were circulating the Supreme Court before had purchased for themselves luxury cars worth millions of pesos.

It turned out that the problem of the dwindling COLA was not limited to the court employees of Camarines Sur.

After hearing that our complaint was being investigated by the House committee on justice upon the instigation of Rep. Fuentebella, thousands of other court employees joined the protests, as they still do now, against the opaque mismanagement of the JDF.

We believe Chief Justice Davide himself should be blamed for bringing this controversy to where it is now. Instead of assuring us we complained on our dwindling COLA, the Chief Justice, we were told, tried to circumvent the House inquiry by refusing to cooperate under the guise of invoking the fiscal autonomy of the judiciary. Is he trying to hide something?

Instead of answering the complaints, Davide reportedly issued a gag order to all court employees against providing any documents related to the JDF to the House. Is Mr. Davide above the law?

It will be worthy to note that the House justice committee exhausted all remedies to prevent this open confrontation between the judiciary and the legislature.

Under these circumstances, can we blame Rep. Fuentebella and the ninety-odd Congress members for pushing for the impeachment of Mr. Davide?

On the contrary, we think we should support Rep. Fuentebella and his peers.

Contrary to the insinuation in your letter, we believe that Rep. Fuentebella's grandfather, former Camarines Sur Gov. Felix Fuentebella, and his father, former Speaker Jesus Fuentebella, would be very proud of him for standing up for what he believes is right and just.

For sure, we believe the ball is in Davide's court.

(Sgd.) Edgar Sarella, president, Court Employees Association of Camarines Sur; Nadia Iberino and Mario Limjoco, court interpreters, and Pilar Mercadante, legal researcher.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, November 3, 2003
31st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Rom 11:1-2a, 11-12, 25-29
Gospel: Lk 14:12-14

Jesus addressed the one who had invited him and said, "When you give a banquet a dinner, don't invite your friends, or your brothers and relatives and wealthy neighbors. For surely they will also invite you in return and you will be repaid. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Everyone are you then, because they can't repay you; you will be repaid at the resurrection of the upright."

Commentary:

"But when you give a feast, invite instead the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Everyone are you then, because they can't repay you." Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi of Ugo told the clergy of Rimini during the celebration of the annual "Strip the Poor" that the real answers are not the ordinary ways to reach heaven. The ordinary way to reach heaven is through the poor and until the poor the stand the ones of the rich men and lawyers. The rich men seem to shell out because he failed to receive the assurance that because he took no harm of the poor, someone at the entrance of the gate begging for crumbs of on his table while he feasted on rich and abundant foods. Blessed are you when among your friends are your people. Blessed are you when you feel in solidarity with the poor. Blessed are you when you discover that salvation cannot be separated from the compassion for the poor.

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'Tis NPA that is fishers' bane, says top cop

By Alcuin Papa

THE PHILIPPINE National Police Maritime Group denied yesterday it was protecting the interests of big fishpond owners in Bulacan and Pampanga as alleged by the New People's Army which blamed the group's detachment in Hagonoy on Thursday night.

Senior Supt. Romulo Mantegdang, chief of the Maritime Group's National Capital Region command, told the Inquirer yesterday it was the NPA that was involved in extortion activities in the two provinces.

Mantegdang was reacting to an NPA statement the other day which accused the maritime command of "protecting the interests of big fishpond owners in the area to the detriment of poor small fishermen."

"We vehemently deny the NPA's statement that the maritime command protects the interests of big fishpond owners to detriment of small owners. Republic Act 8550 is tasked to protect small fishermen and the maritime group is mandated to enforce and implement this law," Mantegdang said.

He said it was "common knowledge the NPAs are the perpetrators of illegal activities in the area and is involved in extortion of fishpond owners for so-called revolutionary taxes."

Mantegdang also said the maritime group has acted on numerous complaints against dynamite fishing in the area.

This, he said, was the probable reason for the NPA raid on their Hagonoy (Bulacan) detachment. "Our intensive campaign against dynamite fishing and other illegal activities has again cost of people. This is their way of getting back at [us]."

He also denied reports the NPA raid happened because of poor security at the detachment.

Quoting reports, Mantegdang said the seven rebels who assaulted the detachment arrived looking for Chief Insp. Miguel Antonio, the station commander. They identified themselves as police coordinators.

When SPO1 Leonardo Perdino, one of those who died in the raid, asked for identification, the seven pointed their guns at the policemen.

"The suspects said they just wanted to get all the guns in the detachment," Mantegdang said.

But PO3 Bernardo Delos was able to fire at the rebels, killing one of them. The three other policemen present then drew their guns and a three-minute gunfight ensued, Mantegdang said.

"This was not a case of incompetence or laxness on the part of our men because there was a firefight," he said.

According to Mantegdang, the maritime group has filed 53 criminal cases against suspects caught violating RA 8550 in Bulacan and Pampanga.

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Pinoy illegals fleeing S. Korea

SOME 1,000 undocumented Filipino workers in South Korea are expected to arrive in the Philippines by Nov. 15 after they failed to take advantage of an amnesty for illegal foreign workers in that country.

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration chief Rosalinda Baldoz said the Filipino workers would be leaving South Korea before they could be arrested and deported.

On the other hand, around 36,000 Filipino workers availed themselves of the amnesty, which was provided for in the act on the Employment of Foreign Workers which allowed undocumented foreign workers to come out and register so they could obtain employment permits.

The amnesty registered between 70,000 and 86,000 illegal foreign workers in South Korea. The amnesty ended on Oct. 31.

The South Korean government has given illegals who failed to register under the amnesty up to Nov. 15 to leave the country on their own and avoid imprisonment.

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Poll shows Bush losing support for war effort

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush is losing public support for his war and economic policies, according to a new poll which for the first time shows that a majority of Americans disapprove of his handling of Iraq.

A slim majority, 51 percent, disapprove of his handling of Iraq, while 47 percent approve, according to the ABC News/Washington Post poll released Sunday.

Private chats cute to 10 Americans say Bush has made the nation more prosperous, while 58 percent—a new high—say the president fails to understand their problems.

The economy remains a major issue, with 65 percent of Americans approving of the way Bush is handling the economy and 33 percent disapproving. It's a wide margin, 62 percent to 38 percent, the public sees the economy as a more pressing problem than terrorism.

Most Americans, 54 percent, continue to believe the war was worth fighting, less than's down from 70 percent in April. A new high—62 percent—say the level of US casualties is unacceptable. The poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 26-29 and has an overall margin of error of 3 percentage points. AP

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E-mail: [illegible]
Editor Louie C. Cano

STANDING BY Her woman is Stella's boyfriend, Milano Sanchez, Barbra's hairdresser.

Stella L thankful for Kris-Joey split

By Nica Vidora

MOST starlet Stella L thanks her boyfriend Milano Sanchez for being with her when his name was dragged into the controversial split of talk show host Kris Aquino and actor-politician Joey Marquez.

In the heat of the Kris-Joey controversy, Stella and Jackie Forster were identified as Joey's two other women even while he was with Kris. Stella was also identified as the woman who reportedly had given Joey a sexually-transmitted disease.

"I have first-hand [experience] that [Milano] is the real deal," said Stella, referring to the talk show host's admission that she had been jealous of Stella and Jackie. "When [Kris] mentioned my name during the Joey issue, everybody became interested in me," she explained. "Now, I have so many projects. Nakulay ako [I'm taken again]."

Her boyfriend Milano, 31, is the youngest brother of broadcaster Korina Sanchez, to whom Kris gave her endorsee, the-kiddo, barred interview on "TV Patrol" on his violent breakup with the mayor of the village City. Kris and Korina are also co-hosts of "Morning Girls."

"We have been together since year 2000," Milano told Inquirer Entertainment last week. "When I met her, she was already a hold actress. It's just a job. What she tells me, that's it. She's not spreading [around] too many."

Milano said his sister Korina knew that he has been seeing Stella even before the Kris-Joey affair. He said Korina was aware that he and Stella were together when Kris dropped her bombshell.

"But we don't talk about personal matters," he said. "Korina was not mad for Stella, but my mother [was]. I only see my sister on fiestas, during family gatherings."

According to him, during the Kris-Joey split, Stella, 18, was in Milano's house when Joey was controlled on his cell phone. Joey asked Stella what she would be telling a radio interview on his alleged role in the breakup.

"He [Joey] was asking for information," Milano said. "He apparently wanted to know what Stella would be saying during the radio interview."

Stella said she told Joey she would be only telling the truth.

The couple, according to Stella, was that Joey had courted her after they met last January. She said Milano was in one of their "off" periods at that time.

"We have been together since 2000, but it's an on and off relationship," Stella said.

'Taking, galanggong'

She said Joey had wanted calling her on his cell phone after they met. Their first date was dinner at Vikki, a Japanese restaurant on Pinoy Road in Makati City.

[illegible]

Barbra sells clothes

The return of Mariah /A13

Enter Bobby Garcia

DID YOU KNOW...

American pop singer **Mandy Moore** is also reportedly performing in Cebu after her Mar. 21 show at The Fort open field, produced by MTV Philippines, a local TV network, negotiated with Mandy's representation so she could perform for the network's eighth Pilipinas Countdown Concert in Iloilo City, Nov. 19 to 22. But Mandy's [illegible] asked for a fee of US $80,000 (P4.4 million) for only five songs. The network did not bite. The US singer is one of several foreign stars in raising Manila in the last two months of the year, threatening to do wars out the visits of Boni Filipino counterparts who have their own shows in the same period, including **Gary Valenciano** and **Regine Velasquez**.

The WORLD

Edna Lawrence B. Rivera

Palestinian premier ready to talk peace with Sharon

RAMALLAH, West Bank—Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie said on Saturday he was willing to take up Israeli leader Ariel Sharon's offer to meet for talks on reviving a US-backed peace plan battered by violence.

Signaling an apparent softening in Israel's position, Sharon said on Thursday he was ready to negotiate with Qurie once the Palestinian prime minister had consolidated his position.

Qurie is locked in a dispute with President Yasser Arafat over the composition of the cabinet and security posts and is trying to form a government to replace an emergency cabinet whose 100-day term expires on Tuesday.

Qurie said no date had been set for a meeting. But asked about the possibility that he would hold talks with the right-wing Israeli prime minister, he told reporters: "We are not against (it)."

After Arafat nominated Qurie as prime minister in September, Israel suggested it would not deal with him because it saw him as Arafat's lackey. Israel says Arafat incites militant attacks on Israelis, a charge he denies.

Qurie spoke in his praise as a man of peace from Israeli opposition Labor Party leader Shimon Peres who addressed a memorial ceremony for assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the eighth anniversary of his death.

Packing a same square in Tel Aviv, some 100,000 Israelis listened to songs and speeches recalling the heady days of peacemaking a decade ago as they honored Rabin.

"Mr. (Qurie) believes terrorism must be stopped for the good of the Palestinians, that peace must be achieved and compromises made," Peres said in the square where Rabin was shot by an ultra-nationalist Jew opposed to his peace efforts.

"He is a man of deeds, someone with whom it is possible to hold a serious dialogue," Peres, Israel's leading dove, said about Qurie at the ceremony, where left-wing groups gained banners demanding that Israel withdraw from occupied land.

It was anyone's guess whether the largest-ever annual turnout at the annual ceremony was a protest at the doubling of terrorism on a Rabin monument or the vote on Friday or the resurgence of an Israeli "peace camp" deflated by three years of violence.

In the latest bloodshed, Israeli forces shot and killed two Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinian security officials said.

Palestinian violence during the Palestinian uprising and the killing of both sides in many key ceremonies have stalled the peace "road map" the United States, European Union, Russia and the United Nations presented in April.

The plan calls for an end to bloodshed and the start of confidence-building measures, such as a Palestinian crackdown on militants and a freeze to Jewish settlement expansion, leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state by 2005. Reuters

AN ISRAELI woman holds a candle during a memorial ceremony marking the eighth anniversary of the assassination of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv Nov. 1. Tens of thousands of Israelis gathered Saturday night to mark the event, showing their continued support for the stalled peace process. AFP

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Nature helps control fires in California

LOS ANGELES—Heavy firefighting endured overnight rain, snow and near-freezing temperatures in the mountains of Southern California on Saturday, as blinding flames drenched wilderness raging for more than a week and gave hope the devastating blazes would be contained early next week.

"This is the day we didn't believe we would ever see," said Andrea Tuttle, Director of the California Department of Forestry. "We don't have any more hot flames anywhere."

Temperatures have plummeted by some 60 degrees Fahrenheit in the last two days, from around 90 degrees (32 Celsius) to 20 degrees (-3 Celsius), and heavy rains and snow that stood on Friday night and carried through into Saturday morning proved a boon to the crews.

Mike McGreary, deputy chief of fire operations for California's Office of Emergency Services, said, "The weather has been very, very good to us over the last 24 hours. It looks like Southern California is going to have some really good humidity over the next several days," he told reporters. He said the fires, which killed 20 people, destroyed more than 3,000 homes and burned tens of thousands of hectares, had "pretty much stopped and in some cases have stopped."

Confident the tide had turned in their favor, authorities started releasing the crews from the front lines and sending them home on Saturday. Officials said firefighters from Las Vegas, counting all the 16-hour days fighting the flames, had handed out ready to work in tourists on Friday night in the San Diego County community of Ramona.

The dramatic weather shift could mean the fires will be contained about three days sooner than anticipated. While officials reported on Friday the six fires still burning were at least 25 percent contained, the picture on Saturday was much brighter, prompting cautious optimism all the blazes would be fully contained by Monday night.

The Cedar Fire, by far the most devastating, killing 14 people, destroying 2,207 homes and charring 110,000 hectares in the mountains near San Diego, was 35 percent contained and expected to be fully contained by Monday night, two days earlier than previously reported.

"We are looking much better than we were," an official at the Cedar Fire said. He tempered his optimism, though, noting the weather conditions were "a double-edged sword" that could also produce high winds to breathe new life into the fires.

The Paradise Fire, also in San Diego, was 80 percent contained, while the Old Fire, in San Bernardino County, was 45 percent contained. The Grand Fire, on the outskirts of Los Angeles, was reported to be fully contained by Saturday night.

More rain and snow was forecast for Sunday night.

The more than 100,000 residents who fled their homes over the past week crowded back into areas cleared by the 14 major fires to see if their homes were among the more than 3,334 destroyed in the record 800,000 hectare fires. Reuters

Confidence in Russia drops after Yukos oil row

MOSCOW—A few weeks ago, Russia seemed on an unstoppable roll as investors flocked to one of the world's fastest growing economies, but a sudden escalation of the state's conflict with oil giant Yukos has killed confidence.

President Vladimir Putin prided himself on bringing stability after the chaotic post-Soviet era, as his administration attracted Western capital and enabled Russians to repatriate funds stashed abroad.

Now in its fourth year of economic growth, Russia's gross domestic product expanded 6.5 percent in the first nine months of 2003, almost on a par with China.

But the spectacle of prosecutors going after the country's largest oil group, jailing its chief executive on fraud charges and freezing nearly half its shares has provoked deep unease in business circles.

"We believe that the notion of political stability, one of the cornerstones of the Russian investment case over the past few years, has been dealt a substantial if not lasting blow," the most bearish group analyst at Troika Dialog said.

Yukos, considered the first Russian company to gain an international reputation for transparency and good corporate governance, is in the final stages of a merger with rival Sibneft that would create the world's fourth largest private oil and gas producer.

In a statement of alarm at the increasing fallout, Troika met with the chairman of Renaissance Capital, a leading investment bank. Thursday shortly after prosecutors impounded a 44-percent stake in Yukos owned by chief executive Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his allies.

Although Putin insisted there is no connection between the prosecution of Khodorkovsky, the second major Yukos shareholder to be jailed since July, was an outspoken critic of the Kremlin's support for Western majors looking to replenish dwindling reserves, but Putin are already being delayed.

The Financial Times reported that 50 oil giant Exxon Mobil and Chevron Texaco had pushed talks on the purchase of a major stake in Yukos. Sibneft after Khodorkovsky's arrest.

The British business daily also reported that French food giant Danone had postponed its planned $900-million takeover of Russian dairy products group Wimm-Bill-Dann.

British oil giant BP, which took $7.7 billion into a joint venture with Russian oil producer TNK this year, shrugged off the Yukos crisis however and insisted it was to the rise "for the long term."

And Moody's, which this month upgraded Russia's credit rating to investment grade, citing rising economic growth on the back of high world oil prices and responsible financial policy that has seen bank reserves swell and foreign debt paid down, reaffirmed its decision on Friday.

But a greater risk to that massive capital flight will resume, reserving the Russian economy of possible investment which has been a vital engine of growth in recent years.

For the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia recorded a net capital inflow of $13.5 billion in the second quarter of this year, before the oil spooners, an estimated $7 billion fled the country.

"This is not only about foreign oil interests, it's about Russian money coming back or not coming back. Stability and security of property rights are the key," Christof Ruehl, the World Bank's chief economist in Russia, told AFP.

"Putin's reforms were seen as successful because there was confidence and Russian companies wanted to repatriate their profits. The risk is that even if the government pursues reforms, the confidence will no longer be there," said Nikolay Orlova, an analyst at Alfa Bank. AFP

A RUSSIAN artist performs with hoops during a cultural show called "Days of Russian Culture in India" in New Delhi on Nov. 1. AFP/Sajjad Hussain

Thailand may legalize its famous sex industry

BANGKOK—Thailand is considering legalizing its famous sex industry but human rights advocates, go-go bar owners and many of the prostitutes themselves believe the move will do nothing but line the government's pockets.

The justice ministry has announced plans to hold a "public hearing" later this month on whether or not the government should amend or repeal legislation which outlaws one of the world's biggest flesh trades.

But there are questions over whether the reforms are aimed at improving the lot of exploited sex workers, taking in a cornucopia of tax revenue from the multibillion-dollar industry, or protecting the establishments—many alleged to have government ties—who control the trade.

"It's nothing new to us," said Chanvanchai Ajalak, director of Empower Foundation which champions the rights of Thailand's estimated 200,000 sex workers.

"The clients, the owners, not the women, and the government thinks problems will be solved if they are legalized. But there are many powerful people making decisions above the law. Why don't we look at them?" she told AFP.

One of the major concerns is a proposal to register sex workers, a move the women fear will stigmatize them forever and prevent them from seeking work elsewhere.

"If we register, it cannot include brothers, cannot control owners, and profit-sharing will remain unequal. Perhaps it is just another oppressive regulation against the women, because society does not accept the people in these jobs," Chanvanchai said.

Chulalongkorn University professor Narong Pinyopusarerk, a researcher for the ruling Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, has proposed Gadang-Star key outsiders from the existing law.

"The articles are exploitative, providing opportunities for police to take advantage of the girls," he said, explaining that one of them, makes it illegal for a woman to "behave" like a prostitute.

"If we abolish these articles, they can do their professions legally ... and with fewer opportunities for police and authorities to exploit them." AFP

AHEAD OF PRINCE CHARLES

Survey: Britons prefer William to be next king

LONDON—Britons are increasingly backing Prince William to inherit the throne ahead of his father Prince Charles, according to a series of polls published Sunday.

A Gold 39 percent of respondents agreed that William, second in line to the throne, should succeed Queen Elizabeth II as British's next monarch, up 11 points since last year, a Sunday poll showed.

Those backing him to the throne Charles to be the next king also stood at 39 percent, but represented a fall of nine points on a year ago, according to the survey published in The Mail on Sunday newspaper.

The numbers in favor of Charles is in line with a separate survey of young Britons published Sunday, which showed that 38 percent of 16- to 24-year-old respondents wish to see him succeed the queen.

But young Britons overwhelmingly prefer William as the next monarch—66 percent according to an ICM survey.

The telephone poll of 502 young Britons was carried out last Wednesday and Thursday after the publication of a book by Princess Diana's former butler, Paul Burrell, which heavily criticizes the royal family's treatment of William's mother while she was alive.

According to the ICM survey, 66 percent of young Britons believe William will a "good monarch" on how to live, compared with 68 percent who say the same is true of the queen and 53 percent of Charles.

Both royal polls were published just months after a leading British think-tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research, recorded a radical shake-up in monarchy.

In the YouGov poll of just over 2,000 British adults, half of respondents said the monarchy should be retained only if reformed, up nine points from last year, while 21 percent said it should be abolished, a rise of three points.

Meanwhile, a quarter of young Britons predict that the monarchy will be dead within a decade, while 82 percent agreed that the royal family is "very privileged" and 75 percent said it is "out of touch with ordinary people".

On a positive note for the royals, 81 percent of 16- to 24-year-old think they are good for tourism, 79 percent for charities and 71 percent said they give British an prestige abroad.

Prince Charles spent Saturday traveling in former royal splendor Indian-style, visiting ancient palaces and meeting Indian royalty in Jaipur, capital of the western desert state of Rajasthan.

He arrived there late Friday and was accorded a royal welcome by the Maharaja (general of Jaipur Lieutenant Brigadier Bhawani Singh, former polo player, the state where princely ruled provinces for decades before the practice was scrapped in 1949.

Charles is on his first visit to India since a divorce was on day trip to February 1992 with his then wife, the late Diana Princess of Wales. They divorced 10 months later.

His trip comes after politicians of the self-affected by Burrell, which has put the late princess back on the front pages of newspapers here.

Diana died in a car crash in Paris in 1997. AFP

UNMASTED! Britain's Prince Charles greets artists at a reception given by the royal family of Jaipur in Jaipur, India, Saturday, Nov. 1. Prince Charles is on a nine-day visit to India with an eye on business while conservation and enhancing relations between India and Britain. AP

Cell phone explodes in Thai's hand

BANGKOK—A Thai man narrowly escaped serious injury wh on his mobile phone exploded in his hand, blasting through to mother room and shattering into pieces.

Wichai Thongsaengchan said he answered the Nokia phone from his desk but he does no find it had switched itself off, and when he tried to turn it on again it blasted into fragments that spread over a three-metre area.

"My hand would have been more seriously harmed without the leather cover on the phone. If I had been using it my ear would have been burnt," he told The Nation newspaper.

Wichai said he suspected the blast was caused by the battery, which may have come from pirated equipment but bought at a computer cent from a Bangkok mobile phone shop and possibly a fake.

He speculated that it could also have been linked with a recent row he had with a neighbour who complained with the management or police. AFP

Heir to Spanish throne to wed divorced reporter

ROCASOLANO

MADRID—Prince Felipe, heir to the throne of Spain, will marry divorced Spanish television journalist Letizia Ortiz Rocasolano next summer, the royal palace said in a surprise announcement Saturday.

The 35-year-old prince, son of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia, will on Thursday officially propose to the 31-year-old current affairs presenter at his grandfather's palace in Athenians Cathedral in Madrid," an official communique announced, a day before the queen's 65th birthday.

Ortiz, who also worked for the now-defunct newspaper ABC and the CBN plus television show-

ord, had married one of her former workers in 2000 but divorced a year later.

Prior to church wedding was held at the time, the Roman Catholic Church was not expected to oppose her remarrying.

The announcement was expected to cause a stir in Spain's political groupings, both on the left and right-wing.

The role of Prince Felipe, the royal couple's eldest child and only son, is not defined in Spain's constitution but mostly involves officially representing the royal household both in Spain and abroad.

King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia have also voiced reservations at the match, saying that Ortiz "reconciles the necessary conditions" to share their son's responsibilities, according to a spokesperson for the royal household.

The prince has been brought up to assume the responsibility of the Spanish monarchy, crowned Juan Carlos in November 1975 when his father acceded to the throne two days after the death of dictator Francisco Franco.

He has had several romantic relationships in the past including the royal house has always maintained a studious from silence. The last relationship one was with a Norwegian model, Eva Sannum.

The wedding, which according to the press leaked four years, ended in December 2001 and was never officially announced by the Spanish royal household.

It was criticized by Spanish monarchists opposed to a marriage between the future king and a commoner who previously worked as a lingerie model.

The prince's two sisters, princesses Elena and Cristina, are married to Jaime de Marichalar and former international handball star, Inaki Urdangarin, respectively. Members of the royal are members of the aristocracy.

Felipe, born in January 1968, has usually increased his public duties since the age of 6 in preparation for one day taking over rising of Spain.

He often represents his country at the habitation conferences for heads of state or government to Latin America and regularly carries out cultural trips abroad and in Spain.

He was also raised in the German press earlier in the year during a visit to Berlin for talks with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder as "Europe's most attractive bachelor." AFP

Mariah returns to Asia

SHOW TIME

WHEN American pop diva Mariah Carey performs her first concert in Manila on Nov. 16 at The Fort open field, in Taguig City, she will be returning to Asia.

In 1995, Mariah performed in Tokyo for the Asiaville of her world tour "Daydream."

"I'll never forget the emotional rollercoaster from my perspective on that stage," Mariah recalled. The goosebumps came "as I looked out to the audience for the first time. I really love performing in Japan."

Mariah's 13-year, platinum-singing career includes many awards and accolades, hit songs, albums, concerts and music videos. Her first single, "Vision of Love," won for the Grammy-nominated new female pop vocal performance.

Mariah was ecstatic the first time she heard her first song on the radio. "My friend and I were in a car and we both ended up screaming and calling people on the phone," she recalled.

She recreated the momentous career in her semi-autobiographical debut movie "Glitter."

Another moving point was when she made her debut as music video director for the 1995 album "Fantasy" first follow-up, "Daydream," also crossed straight to the top, debuting at No. 1.

Another memorable moment came when "One Sweet Day", her collaboration with another record Mariah Carey, Boyz II Men, made history as the pop song that spent 16 weeks, the biggest number of weeks, on the top slot.

But her all-time favorite is "Butterfly," her 1997 album, which signified her metamorphosis into a liberated woman in charge of both her life and career.

She remembers the album's grand launch at Tunnel Records in New York.

"That was really a special day for me. "Even though my personal life was changing dramatically, 'Butterfly' was really close to my heart and I was genuinely excited about the release."

In 1999, she received the Artist of the Decade award from *Billboard* magazine.

A favorite marriage moment was her homecoming concert, which was recorded and broadcast as a TV special in 1999.

"It was totally bizarre to be performing in my junior high school," she said. "But it gave me a great sense of coming full circle."

CAREY'S CATHARSIS. Tempests and tribulations marked Mariah's public and private lives.

Her latest CD, "Charmbracelet," is also a sentimental favorite because it was released after a slew of tempests and tribulations in both her public and private lives.

Mariah now calls the experience "cathartic."

Her fellow, with whom she had just recently and had grown close to, died unexpectedly. "That is why there is a lot of emotion in the album. There's a song I wrote for him as it."

The album title is largely symbolic for Mariah.

"Charm bracelets have always had a personal and sentimental significance for me," she explained. "Charms are like pieces of yourself that you hand on to other people, items that tell your story and that can be shared. Like a song."

The Manila stop of Mariah's "Charmbracelet World Tour 2003" is presented by Globe/ G Phone Open Line, Swatch Blanc and Tommy Hilfiger Watches, in cooperation with *No Cutlery*, the official Tommy Hilfiger Ranch Store. "Idea Star Time" and GMA Network.

Tickets to "Mariah Live in Concert: The Charmbracelet World Tour 2003" are available at Ticketworld, 891-9081 and 634-2148.

Jessa 'reborn and happy

PERFORMING to a packed crowd at Sunday Mornio last Oct. 22 in Town Tempus... Reborn," Jessa has come back as a country artist.

"I was very happy that my medleys of Shirley Bassey, Donna Summer and Tina Turner songs, plus my hits, were very well applauded," Jessa says. "Of course, I was nervous at first, but knowing that we prepared well, and with the initial warm response of the audience, I easily gained my confidence."

Jessa's mom Ogie Alcasid, who has just celebrated her 14th anniversary in the business with his own show at the Araneta Coliseum, and Jodi Sandoval, whose success he singles it the Filipino version of "Can't Help Falling..." the Marina Gardens opening song.

Jessa, a multi-platinum artist with record-breaking albums and son of the ABS-CBN crooner, "Ogie," sang cuts from "Exhibit Bang Umagas," her latest album from Star Records.

Star Records has just launched her latest single, "Yaman Magbabad Pa ng Ulan," composed by Vim Cayetanosdo.

"Jessa ... Believer" was produced by Star Records and MVM Entertainment, stars also Glenda Bilbo Espaguerra, Weightless Cesario, DJM, Yes 106, Love Radio, 90.9, her manager Manny Salazar of DMSE Entertainment, Star Records and ABS-CBN, "and my husband, Dingdong Dimaculangan, who is very supportive, and last but not the least ... Jayda, my daughter, who is my inspiration."

DID YOU KNOW...

The women guests of **Annabel Rama** at her birthday party at the Discovery Suites in Ortigas last Thursday were: pleasantcher for her lovely and youthful look that night. They also learned her to admit that her getting-up methods are ever-changing as Annabel revealed that the jewelry was the result of McCoy.

Crossover presents Lani again

ON THURSDAY, Nov. 6, Asia's Nightingale, Lani Misalucha, performs soothing and flawless hits in an intimate evening at the Cupiddo's Bar of the Manila Intercontinental.

Before Lani hit the big time, she was a singer with various bands and also a solo lounge performer. She was the voice behind many commercial jingles and for a time, was considered the "mistaken queen," when duplicated the voices of Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey and Celine Dion.

"My priority is always my family and we enjoy a simple life," says Lani. "My kids' career successes, as I wanted to focus on taking care of them. I was happy with whatever I was earning on the side. Several years later, I received a great opportunity to try my luck in mainstream entertainment. I seriously discussed it with my husband and we decided I would give it a go."

"I was just thankful that it came when my kids were big enough to move in best take care of themselves and when they could already understand the demands of my work," she adds.

Her first major solo concert was "The Crossover Live Tour" in 2001. It filled up the Big Dome and spawned several other major Lani Misalucha concerts.

Catch Lani again at the Cupiddo's Bar of the Manila Intercontinental on Thursday.

General Salvegas to musical diverse

Also performing in the show are the quartet The Opera, the R&B group Alit, and soulful singer and composer Marielle.

For ticket inquiries, call Crossover (712-9701 or 712-9704), Ticket World (891-9081), or Cupiddo's (750-0000).

MISALUCHA. Family first.

Crossover Presents Lani Misalucha" is produced by MonteCarlo in cooperation with Cafe Prem, Jade Hotel and Gandhi.

Stella L thankful for Kris-Joey split

Stella said she had brought along her friends, but she and Joey are at a separate table.

Stella said Joey wanted to see her date. This time, he wanted to go to her house, where she would cook his favorite lasagna (a craving acquired during Stella's pregnancy).

A third date followed last Feb. 3, the night before Stella left for Singapore to work there as a guest relations officer for a month. Their date was to Joey's condominium unit in Ocean at The Pier in Taguig City.

"He kissed (during that date)," Stella admitted. "But when he started kissing me in the neck, I told him 'no.' He asked me why, and I told him I was leaving for Singapore and that I had just met him. I told him to wait for my return. He agreed to wait. And I love him for that, for respecting my wishes."

"He never lied nor so I couldn't have given him any sexually intimidated disease," she said.

At the time she was dating Joey, the Paradigm mayor had divided he was having an affair with Kris, she said.

"He told me it was just (friends romance)," Stella said. "I believed him."

What's going on?

She said that while she was in Singapore, Joey called her all the time on her cell phone. It's one of those calls, Stella said, by his world tends her from the airport where she screamed and they would stay together for three days before she went home, Stella said.

"But I arrived two days earlier than scheduled," she said. "That was when I learned that he and Kris were together again. I was ruined. Why? What's going on? He would ring me while I was in Singapore. Once he even told me he was sick and wished that I was by his side. What's this? He just made a fool out of me.

"Nanay ako (I got mad) and told a reporter that Joey was cruel to me."

She said Joey called her and warned her the same night blew up in their faces, she said.

"I told him then that I was only going to tell the truth," Stella said.

The issue died down, until Kris confessed to Korina on national television last September that she had left Joey after he pointed a gun at her during a fight. It's also mentioned during the tell-all session that she had been jealous of Stella and Jackie Forster.

Stella has since been enjoying what could be her biggest break to date. In the years after she signed a three-year, 14-picture contract with Viva Films.

Ex a 'nobody'

Stella was introduced as Ingrid Mendoza, her real name, in "Scorpio Nights 2," which starred Joyce Jimenez, and with whom Stella had a kissing scene.

But after "Scorpio Nights 2," Stella didn't make any more movies with Viva.

While awaiting out her contract, Stella went to Japan to work in clubs in order to survive and support her 17-year old daughter.

"Her father was a former model, and he's still a celebrity until now," she said. "He went to the States, and three months later, I learned he had a girlfriend there who was pregnant. We ended the relationship over the phone."

'Good actress'

Stella signed up anew with another producer for a three-year contract and was relaunched as Stella L.

What followed was a string of bold roles in small movies. But her performance as a lesbian in director Jeffrey Tam's "Highway Girls" was noticed by film critic and TV show host Butch Francisco.

"I was surprised because I didn't even know Butch," Stella said. "So, yes, I might even be a good actress."

The former flight attendant of Iloilo is now confident she could make it in the movies.

"I hope my career takes off this time," she said. "I want to be known as a character actress in my age. I don't think I should be doing bold roles."

She will appear in three movies, one of which casts her as the wife of Eddie Garcia. She is also one of the mega models of Iliac's, a chain of skin and body care stores. Recently, she had a liposuction treatment at Iliac's to remove belly fat and reduce her waistline from 30 inches to 25.

"I also have so many out of town shows," Stella said proudly.

"I've never had it this good."

INQUIRER

OPINION

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No settlement

WE support the President's initiative to bring the heads of the three branches of government together, in an attempt to find a way to end the impeachment crisis. But we draw the line at a "settlement" that will impose a political solution on a legal problem.

The public will not stand for a compromise that buys short-term peace at the price of long-term damage to the judiciary.

EDITORIAL But this is precisely what is at stake in the procedurally flawed, politically motivated impeachment drive against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

In misleading a second impeachment complaint against Davide, even before the House committee on justice concluded its investigation, Congress committed a grave abuse of discretion, usurped the Supreme Court's power to interpret the Constitution—and, invoking wounded pride and other opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara calls "institutional integrity" pushed the country recklessly into a constitutional crisis.

On Saturday, invoking the principles of her late father, President Macapagal-Arroyo called on the House and the Supreme Court to reason together. "It is... this sense of sacrifice that I have invoked in appealing to the leaders of our legislature and our judiciary to defuse the political impasse we are facing."

The President's speechwriters have, yet again, failed the Chief Executive, mixing metaphors the way Malacañang has been mixing signals. (How does one defuse an impasse?)

But the President's all-things-to-all-ones appeal is misplaced. Given the facts of the impeachment, Ms Macapagal cannot seriously suggest a compromise where the legislature and the judiciary "meet halfway," leaving (among the dentists of the courts, Congress must be asked to routinely smear the premises. There, and only there, can the crisis of the government's gross pavors be resolved.

This is what Davide must have meant when he said over the weekend that the "covenant" that the President sought, and which he supported, must not be mistaken for a "settlement."

The covenant, he said, "must aim at strengthening the role of each of the three branches of government, all for the sake of our country and the preservation of our democratic institutions, and to put an end to the escalation of the crisis at hand." What it does not mean is compromising the judiciary, by forcing it to accept a political solution.

The executive and the legislature exercise their powers as political organs of government. We may like to think that a policy is executed or a law is passed with only the national interest in mind, but this is not and cannot be the case. The Constitution wisely allows for horse-trading, for including riders in legislation, for many opportunities to patronize politics at the art of compromise.

But the courts of justice can exercise their powers only on the basis of facts and the law. To insinuate politics into a judicial decision is to undermine the rule of law itself. Thus, while saying he was open to the President's suggestion, Davide emphasized that the Supreme Court cannot be party to a political settlement. "I will not compromise the independence of the judiciary."

A group of young lawyers has urged the Supreme Court to take precisely this stand: to reject any overtures of a settlement, or even the appearance of one. Their reasoning is unassailable. The high court's power to settle historically divisive issues is based on the mystique of credibility, on what lawyers routinely call the majesty of the law. To accept a settlement now, or even to be perceived as giving way to one, would be fatal to the tribunal's power to persuade.

The Bar Path may find all this talk of mystique and credibility mystifying. For children of rich and powerful families who are used to getting what they want, there is nothing mysterious about power. It comes from the accumulation of wealth, which makes everything else possible.

For the rest of us, we can only depend on the courts, whose mandate in Magsaysay-esque at best: to give more in law to those with less in life. It is for this reason that many Filipinos, from martial law victims to coconut farmers awaiting the final disposition of the controversial coco levy funds, abhor a court-compromising settlement.

Compromise will hide the truth on JDF

ARROGANCE and not the search for the truth is the method being used by pro-Davide manipulators to prevent the transmittal of the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate. Congressmen who signed the impeachment complaint are being pressured to withdraw their signatures so that it would not have the required 1/3 votes (one-third of the House of Representatives) and the complaint would then die a natural death. But then, what happens to the words "Did Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. misappropriate the Judiciary Development Fund?" Were the court employees cheated out of their share? Was he too extravagant in the renovation of the Supreme Court building, the construction of new cottages for justices in Baguio and in the purchase of luxury vehicles for them? We will never know.

Besides, will the withdrawal of signatures deter also the withdrawal of the complaint? I don't think so. The Constitution says an impeachment complaint must have the required one-third vote of the House "at the time of filing." The complaint has been filed, that's a done deal. It cannot be recalled even if signatures are withdrawn. It is too late to withdraw them.

When a bill has been approved and signed by the respective presidents of the bicameral conference committee, that bill is approved with finality. Even if some members withdraw their signatures later, the bill stays approved. I think it is the same thing with an impeachment complaint.

In the arguments against the impeachment complaint, the "experts" (both on legal technicalities, not on the contents of the complaint) as well. The Chief Justice himself has answered those charges in the "Debate" program on GMA 7. I believed him. If he can answer the charges of the impeachment trial, he would be acquitted. So what's all of an impeachment trial?

But Davide says he doesn't want to "sanction the independence of the judiciary" which he represents. To which the congressmen reply that it is not the judiciary that is being accused but only Davide because he is the administration of the JDF.

Davide says the Supreme Court has "fiscal autonomy," meaning everybody else has no business looking into how it spends its money. Congressmen say it has "oversight powers" over any office of the government, including a co-equal branch, especially since the JDF is the result of a law, Presidential Decree 1949. Technicalities again. And Speaker Jose de Venecia's "win-win solution" is also a technicality. The House will acknowledge the "fiscal autonomy" of the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court will acknowledge the "oversight powers" of Congress. Then the two sides will shake hands, forgive everything, go their merry way and resume what they have been doing. But the questions will remain unanswered. The people will remain in the dark. Transparency, the right of the people to information, will be sacrificed on the altar of convenience. De Venecia's "win-win solution" will be a "lose-lose" one to the public.

Ironically, the whole thing started with the desire of some congressmen to help the Supreme Court and give it more money. I understand that some members of the so-called "Boat Bark" who received their half million, Rep. Michael John Duavit and Barbers Robertino Custodio, at the birthday party of Rep. Antonio Nakidi last Saturday and what follows is what they told me:

They wanted to give salary increases to judges to make the wheels of justice move faster. Many cases are vacant because there are few applicants to judgeships. The salaries are not good enough.

But the national government cannot afford to fund the salary increases. Its money is for their thoughts of appropriating some money in addition to the JDF and then the salary increases for judges would be taken from it.

But first, the congressmen need figures before they could craft the necessary legislation. So they asked the Supreme Court for those figures.

But Supreme Court officials thought the congressmen were on a fishing expedition and ordered court employees not to cooperate with the congressmen and not to give them any more documents.

During the House hearings, court employees had complained that their cost of living allowances were going down in spite of the fact that court fees have been raised and the JDF is growing. The lawmakers asked for the audited statements of the Commission on Audit. The COA said the books of accounts do not tally and that many expenses were unexplained for. Then the flagship outrages, lexus-es vehicles, P 120,000 chairs, and 95 million curtains one hears. The congressmen asked to see the books of account that triggered the explosion that is now shaking the foundations of our country.

The Chief Justice refused to cooperate (the congressmen said). In a letter to the Speaker, he said in effect: "It's none of your business."

"We didn't want to impeach him," Duavit and Antonio-Custodio said. "But he left us no choice. We were very arrogant. We thought we something was very wrong and we would be abdicating our duty if we just closed our eyes and let it pass." The sparring between the Supreme Court and the House of Representatives. Finally, the congressmen had enough of it.

So impeachment was the only remedy to arrive at the truth, they said. Wrong.

The only want to see the books of accounts, that's all. And impeachment is too harsh a method to do that.

So here is a problem with end of the constitutional crisis: Why doesn't the House withdraw the impeachment complaint? In return, the Supreme Court will open its books of accounts. If everything is in order, there is nothing to be afraid of. Hide it and people will suspect there is something wrong with it.

Wimpy

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo says Raul Bacs is wrong. There is no crisis in leadership. The presidency, she says, is a "stable force," a "third force." "The executive shall firmly hold the middle ground in this controversy and will not be interpreted as weakness. To be drawn wantonly in either side of this dispute will derail the chances of a principled compromise and further erode national stability."

That is all very well and fine, but not being drawn in either side of the controversy and holding firmly on to the middle ground is the last thing GMA has done. In fact, she has swung wildly from one side to the other depending on who seems to be gaining public support.

First, she took the side of those who wanted to oust Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. At the very least by tacitly going along with them, if not by actively mobilizing them, as Joker Arroyo has that gift from her a point. GMA is the head of State, apart from being the President. Any de facto, who has been pushing for shorter change to make his only impossible dream of one day ruling the country, is her chief ally for her to not be able to prevail on her core party to boot off a serious plot by a serious threat in Congress, who belong to the party headed by the biggest crook in this country, to impeach Davide for apparent crookedness, that a more-neutral arbitrator, if the cannot lead her own party, she cannot lead the nation.

But I may be wrong about finding Cojuangco being the biggest crook in this country. The First Couple may already have grabbed that distinction from him.

Then GMA pushed a compromise to GMA ruling about? The only principled compromise here is for Congress to finish itself to impose the case of the coconut levy, which is where Cojuangco's wealth came from. Nowhere does Malacañang propose this. Malacañang proposes a "principled compromise" with Davide.

But having taken the side of the plaintiff, GMA rushed off to the other side after Senator Aquino and Jaime Cardinal Sin spoke out in defense of Davide. If she wanted to hold firmly to the middle ground so as not "to derail the chances for a principled compromise," what in God's, or the devil's, name was she doing at the Edsa Shrine on the 15th anniversary of the Supreme Court? What was she doing right in the middle of that group holding hands with Davide and saying peace in the world along with Cardinal Sin? Why did she not throw herself as well at the bruises and half-hands with De Venecia as the president's supporters while an angry crowd milled outside, Cojuangco hapless at the head of it, calling on lightning bolts to strike the unholy?

First and other research groups say the perceived crisis in leadership has all but destroyed GMA. Still, if so, there is something sublime about it. It's almost enough to make you believe in divine retribution, or in providential irony, the one thing that destroyed GMA is precisely being the one thing that GMA has abused her out of it. Lest we forget, GMA became President by refusing to do anything about the plague Estrada unleashed on us, dead become. As late as the BW documents would show, those people were hogging her to speak out against the growing cancer she refused to be bound. Who knows? Maybe she did not want to be drawn to either side of the dispute so as not to derail the chances of a principled compromise with Erap and further erode national stability.

Thankfully for the nation, civil society, media, several principled senators and representatives and Cory and Cardinal Sin, saw that the only principled compromise you can have with treachery was to oust it. But very thankfully for the nation, GMA was the first in profit from it. If it's true now that GMA is being undone by pulling another disappearing act while wanting for the dust to settle down to show which side she's on, then it's the point. If all else fails, we still have wrangle a people power in time not very divine magesty, or remotely had bequeathed a notation on the throne which splendor. Where the pols wish to destroy they first make, well, Wimpy.

Return JDF issue to committee

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Antonio Ocampo-Gaston

SEN. Sergio Osmeña is still insisting if he should run in 2004. If the term-limited Vice President Noli Lapuz could run a dead-end campaign, and Senator Osmeña is a shoo-in for the Senate, why not? But he admitted that my report was accurate about the pilgrimage he led his wife to last month into her husband's shadow. Osmeña visited Vilar's shrine in Lourdes, France, to ask for divine guidance, as Cory did. She visited the nearby Fatima center. Sen. Johnny Ansay, who assists Dr. Cortes regularly in their "Mahabaratha Group," also miraculously cured his ailment through prayer. I can imagine the temptation for Mrs. Arroyo to visit Our Lady of Medjugorje to pray for guidance from Dr. Cortes prior the presidential race. In '87 after 10 percent of the votes, leading GMA, Boni and FPJ. Fighting for the rest.

* * *

Recently I wrote about an important Manila conference last Oct. 28, sponsored by Ex-Ambassador Amado Valdez, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) Comp., in order to assess the performance of the bases-to-VFA shift and make it as effective tool for development. But unfortunately it never materialized, as Foreign Secretary Blas Oplo suddenly decided to withdraw at the last minute. Valdez had also invited two important speakers from delivering their talk. Pilch, our veteran guru, Valdez was advised that because not provide over the conduct as he was already retired as a member of the Senate. Valdez's copy of this President's order, dated Oct. 16, a handy day apparently what got Oplo's in time. Valdez's retired ministers to dig into a recent speech to Cambridge City involving US ambassador to Singapore Joseph Nye's proposal to limit the Canadian clothing industry.

This is the second unfortunate episode for the affable Valdez, the first being his sudden ouster as government corporate counsel, apparently on environmental grounds. Both times due to his isolated stand that the Pinatubo contract was abrogated. I am saddened by the rough treatment accorded Valdez, as he does not deserve it. He was the first law dean to join the Estrada impeachment defense as private practitioner during the Cabinet matter he

* * *

Thank God calmness seems to be returning. There is a growing distance among Estrada members as evidenced by the complaint and re-filing the JDF issue to the committee, which can consume all the documents from the Commission on Audit by midnight today. One of them is Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III, who reportedly said that "the impeachment is not dead but is impasse, which is to believe in the public's guilt, is too much at this point." On the other hand, a group of the nine lawmakers, including Bulacan's Rayphil Wendoc, who is among the signatories who have withdrawn their signatures, is pressing for the creation of a five-member "truth commission" to look into the JDF's possible evidence.

All these efforts are aimed at enabling the lawmakers to arrive at a consensual way to save the JDF and protect it from possible nullities. But the first thing they ought to do is to junk impeachment as it evidently has little moral high ground and far too flaws.

* * *

Many presumptions are underway. Bukidnon Rep. Miguel Zubiri said in a statement that his signed decision to vote against for the "question of the effect" in Tuesday's vote from heading the Council of Senate and Congress, which the sole signatory of the funds cited was the Chief Justice himself. But as is now evident, Bunye, who serves as his father's eyes and ears, is only the committee vice chair, one of 11 members, and therefore is not the chief himself. Senator Osmeña, a known Estrada man, and the co-chair, Virginia Romano, the first division clerk of court. In view of this, he's agreed to Zubiri's withdrawal for signature. Many lawmakers were also behind the wrong impression that the JDF was "transmitted" to the JDF, but as I wrote first the last printed out in the recent "Debate" program, a special COA audit report on the JDF authorized by no less than Congress and conducted for five years and every thing was a mess.

* * *

Senators Francis Pangilinan and John Osmeña have also seen fit to poll the JDF away from impeachment. Pangilinan, Senate justice committee chair, advocates a stand this not same fashioned last week. first passed 19-1999, which created the JDF under the "sole prerogative" of the Chief Justice. Then-Sen. he said the JDF was created a bill that prohibits the grant of allowances by local government units to members and personnel of the judiciary, retaining those instituted from the 13th. Osmeña had earlier objected to the amendment provision that would have limited the JDF's allowances, and to its right. It is ill-disguised corruption that makes the judges beholden to the local executives, after the long possible court cases against the latter. By specifying those allowances to the JDF the court set are thus instituted insulating its judiciary.

The miseducation of George W. Bush

COMMENTARY

Paul D. Hutchcroft

WHEN Lady Laura Bush played schoolteacher on her recent trip to Manila, reading stories to Filipino pupils assembled in a specially constructed nook in the presidential palace, it was a fitting image of the presidential palace. When the husband or in the day and toured the Philippine Congress, it became clear that President George W. Bush is the one most in need of schooling. Indeed, there have been few occasions in recent times that could be regarded as so a White House dubbed it just that President Bush has returned home.

Now, Bush conveniently skipped over the fact that the Philippines, for nearly 50 years, a colony of the United States. Together we "liberators liberated the Philippines from colonial rule," Bush proclaimed, referring to the heroic resistance that found the country from Japanese occupation in World War II. Not quite. In 1898 the country made of the long and bloody American war against the independent Philippine republic at the turn of the last century. Perhaps Bush agrees with what Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said in 2001 about the Philippines: "We're seen here a colonial power. We don't take our views and go around the world and say to other country's and states . . . That's just not what the United States does."

The sad fact is that views that Bush has trotted the last several weeks. Even just months ago, the Bush administration was loud of comparing the intervention of long in the postwar American Occupation of Japan, led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur. This was a time when the Bush administration was more economic and political reformist, and received significant support from much of the civilian population.

Unavailable from the start, this historical comparison was less apt than ever by the time of Bush's visit. Indeed, the Koizumi administration forces remains bogged down in Iraq, the greater the comparability with this other mid-20th Bush chooses to ignore it. The more salient figure, it turns out, is another MacArthur: Gen. Arthur MacArthur, the father of Douglas and a leading figure in the colonization of the Philippines. Just as Bush's 2003 triumphalism of possible has become, in hindsight, begun to sound more tragic. After ran and a half years of conflict, the United States established civilian rule on July 4, 1901; it took several more years for the insurgency to be crushed. The nation remained under its control. The seeds were brought under the banner of democracy and drawn some 70,000 US troops, and entered into deeply of thousands of casualties among those it was occupying to help liberate.

Second, Bush's speech to the Philippine public refers that the two countries share—but ignored past them has support for Philippine authoritarianism. Filipinos are justly proud of their rich democratic tradition. Part of the issue of course has not always been supported by the former colonial power. The last time a Bush stood his glass at the Palace, in fact, it was Vice President George H. W. Bush hailing dictator Ferdinand Marcos's then "unique partnership of democratic principles and practices" as President George H. Bush last Monday pledged that the United States would support democracy against terrorism. He was seemingly unaware that his own father had 25 years earlier supported a notorious regime that killed 3,500 and tortured 35,000 of its own citizens. American presidents consistently and poorly fail to distinguish between the region's repressive military forces as exchange for "enhanced" "enhanced national security" of US military bases.

Third, Bush's praise of the fight against terrorist was on course today the centerpiece of an Asia Cold War discourse that just helped to legitimize repressive regimes on the threat—refused power is not good for promoting national self-reliance, reinvented emphasis on military solutions especially in a country where the military has deeply political and patronage dimensions and is not good for democracy and renewed dependence on American support encourages a return to the days when the favorable nod from Washington was a crucial factor in securing the Philippine presidency. Many of the suspected "bad guys" of the Cold War are the recipient of Bush's praise against terror—just as local guerrillas in the past were too readily viewed as mere proxies of international communism, as in local conflicts in the Philippines are now routinely seen as mere manifestations of global terrorism.

The realities on the Philippines, and elsewhere, are usually far more complex. President Bush needs to acknowledge US colonial complicity and US support for dictators, and to recognize the role of the overthrowing and ill-conceived characters of US relations with many client states during the Cold War. Addressing the challenges of our era requires a sound knowledge of history. It is time for President Bush to take a true lesson.

* * *

Paul D. Hutchcroft is an associate professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is currently based in Cebu, on a Fulbright research fellowship, and is author of the forthcoming book Booty Capitalism: The Politics of Banking in the Philippines (Cornell UP).

Judicial putschism—mightier than the Magdalo

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

IF the Lower House transmits the Articles of Impeachment against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. on Nov. 10, would it violate the one-month ban on a year rule on impeachment?

No. It wouldn't violate the Constitution, according to House rules adopted after Joseph Estrada was impeached and the question first arose. The rules say that the House initiates an impeachment proceeding with the Articles of Impeachment by a finance and, that is, when it actually impeaches somebody. That's the way it ought to be, it seems to me.

But some people who have issues, like Raul Roco and Davide, prefer the more technical interpretation that filing a complaint for alleged impeachable offenses initiates impeachment proceedings. That's silly and they know it. What they call "impeachable proceedings" are like the preliminary investigation phase of a criminal case. They know that, but they are pandering to supporters.

The pro-Estrada noise hearings of the Makati Business Club and the Catholic Bishops Conference is. They want to run off the Merchbil of Raul Jacinto and lip its under saying, "look what a good and decent, Bible-reading man you are encroaching." They want us to prejudge the conviction of a virtuous Davide, just as they prejudged the guilt of a venal Estrada. Both shoe-in-prejudgments may be accurate, but they are of facts, not a rule of man, not even of sanity or prudence, or—pardon me—of finesse. Senate conscripts and only regular replacement by less democratic elections can remove me liberty from our heads.

The House rules make impeachment analogous to indictment in ordinary cases. That, the House upholds the case are true rule, but it may conduct its own "preliminary investigation" as it needs to, before filing the proper information and charges against the accused in the proper courts—the Senate. (I say to the Senate's impeachment neighbor, Justice Isagani Cruz, that he has read of saying it.) There is a logical demand rules that there is only one impeachment against Davide. Look at Section 2 Article III (Accountability of Public Officers) of the Constitution and the proper context of the one-year rule:

(3) The House of Representatives shall have the exclusive power to initiate all cases of impeachment.

(5) No impeachment proceedings shall be initiated against the same official more than once within a period of one year.

(6) The Senate shall have the sole power to try and decide all cases of impeachment.

The phrase "all cases of impeachment" in both (3) and (6) refers to one and the same thing. That which the House of Representatives shall have the exclusive power to initiate, is one and the same thing as that over which the Senate shall have the sole power to try and decide. What only the House can initiate, only the Senate can terminate as a case of impeachment.

Accurate for the purposes of argument are rules for—of effect. But if it is the second time the House will initiate a case of impeachment against Davide and not the first time. Then, the first time it exercised that sole power, the initiative by logical necessity, must have tried and decided that first case. The Senate must have terminated that proceeding already, if the House is allegedly initiating a second impeachment case against Davide.

But the Senate has never exercised its sole power to try and decide any case against Davide. How can there be a second case of impeachment initiated already at the House when the first case—of a first one has not been terminated in the Senate, as the Constitution requires? This is illogical contradiction. The impediment of a second impeachment must be time and absurd. Ergo, this is the first and only case of impeachment initiated against Davide in the 13th Congress. Case closed.

I believe that Davide is actually a good and decent man. I hope he will be acquitted at trial. But forgive again, the forgone that are damned such Ergo, only when time the dross is on the other side. No, we don't have to wait. Justice is right, so that we may prove to ourselves that our Lady Justice is blind, that our senators can impartially adjudge the guilt or innocence of an accused, based on evidence at trial, not reputation or intrigue, not even the eye-to of Saint Cory, Cardinal Sin, Jaime Ayala, Bernadette Sembrano-Romualdez and Cielo Nicol.

Davide is said a good man that he could not countenance the seeming victory of evil on Jan. 20, 2001. The impeachment trial got away from him at the outset. 11 votes said the prosecution should be allowed to open its case before he could prove his innocent and rule on Clarissa Ocampo. In Davide cleared. Erroneously on Jan. 20, 2001,—to excuse Justice in his time, by declaring the prosecution's case valid when it simply was not.

He acted as a senior, not a judge. When the Senate voted 11-10 to open the trial, its actions, Davide was not serving as a neutral, impartial judge but was legislating the case in a prejudicial and illegal act of Edsa II, of getting rid of Erap by no and giving to Gloria. His ironic crime is judicial putschism—mightier than Magdalo and grander than ordinary putschism.

If the high court judges permanent to impeach Hilario Davide, and devastate Congress' exclusive powers of impeachment, another Arroyo-ing precedent of silence by the judiciary will be set. Jose Fidel may rule on all yet, and I will be the first to say so. (Dean Jorge Bocobo's Web site is http://deanjorgebocobo.blogspot.com/)

Questionable caption

A PICTURE speaks a thousand words, as the saying goes. Its words can describe something better than a good essayist or video deck of the thing, person or event involved. Unless digitally manipulated (which is easy to do nowadays because of the advances in photo technology), pictures generally do not lie.

Although newspaper photos can speak for themselves, it helps if they are accompanied by captions, or cutlines as journalists call them.

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raoul J. Fabiencia

But describe they contain or identify the persons or incidents depicted. Unfortunately there are instances when the caption does not do justice to or, worst, misinterprets the photo it is supposed to support.

Something similar happened to a photo that came out in the Inquirer Northern section of the September 22 issue. The picture showed the back of two men in robes bowing together with black armbands on their left arms. They right hand pulled over a black cap high in front of the Philippine flag. They appeared to be reciting the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag ceremony.

The photo caption read: "Two lawyers take their pledge of loyalty in front of a Philippine flag in a court in Quezon province not to counter or deny, but to Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide who vowed to resign over an attempt to investigate him for his unsolved judicial funds."

A Manila-based lawyer who maintains a law office in Lucena City cried foul over the caption. The tone of his voice gave me the impression that he was angry, very angry. He said the two lawyers shown in the picture are high-ranking officials of the Quezon chapter of the lawyer group that, of the Philippines, the national association of lawyers.

Questionable

While he knows they support Davide's right to judicial independence, he emphatically said it was "unreasonable and malicious" for the Inquirer to say they pledged their loyalty to him, not to the flag or country, in fact Monday's flag ceremony in front of Lucena City's court building.

The lawyer finds it unthinkable for his two colleagues, whom he claims to know very well, to honor done the act imputed to them by the caption. In an obvious swipe at the correspondent who covered the matter, he said the caption "does not make sense" and that the Inquirer owes them an apology. He said the two lawyers are high-ranking officials of the Quezon chapter of the lawyer group that, of the Philippines, the national association of lawyers.

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He concluded with the statement: "How close was your reporter to the two lawyers for him to be able to hear them swear loyalty to the Chief Justice? It was obvious your reporter just wanted to do his version of the lawyers. Did you know his reporter's name about the lawyers' pledge of loyalty to make your photo more dramatic?"

Although I had no reason to doubt the veracity of the lawyer's statements, I nonetheless checked with independent sources in Lucena City, including retired video panelists Lito Quiroz and Ernie Baron of dz. Some readers tend to exaggerate their complaints, so I make it a point to verify things before I act on them.

Clearance

The lawyer was right. The coming of hands was done in the course of the recitation of the "Pledge of Allegiance" at the flag ceremony that morning. The alleged swearing of loyalty to Davide was not part of the program. Expression of support for Davide were made after the ceremony and was participated in, not only by the two lawyers, but also by others, citizens who are against the filing of the second impeachment charge against Davide.

I'm keeping under wraps the names of the two lawyers but I got the names from reliable sources. Their identities, however, are known in Quezon lawyers and provincial court personnel. Suffice it to say that they belong to the inner circle of Quezon's community of lawyers.

Looking further into the matter, I learned that the caption in question did not come from the correspondent who submitted the photo to the Inquirer's Northern desk. It is the correspondent's endorsement that it was attributed to him because it seems was included in his photo contribution.

It is obvious the newspaper erred in coming in the caption that the two lawyers swore loyalty to Davide. Nothing of that sort happened. Something went wrong somewhere in the preparation of the caption.

Accordingly, the Inquirer apologizes for the mistake. It seeks the indulgence of the lawyers who were wrongfully portrayed in the photo, by the cutline more that that the caption might have caused their reputation. The attention of the newspaper has been called to the boo-boo.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, *Metro Manila Avenue corner* Bgy. and Mercedes Heath, Makati City. Or through the no. 897-4760 to 64, or readers.advocate@inquirer.com.ph

IN THE NEWS

Florentino Feliciano

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There is hope for us

LAST July 23, 2003, Asuel de La Cruz, a 46-year-old passenger, rode on the MRT. On the way to the Quezon Avenue station, he suddenly felt very sick. He became very dizzy and could not breathe.

He was forced to go down at the GMA, Kamuning station and he asked for help and some water. Acomplosse of the MRT, Francis Camacho, immediately attended to him.

In about 10 minutes, the ambulance of Galleon arrived complete with a doctor and emergency medical supplies.

He was rushed to the Heart Center and along the way he was given an IV line and some medicine. He was diagnosed to have suffered a transient heart attack. After a few days of confinement, he was released. Today he is back working, leading a normal life without any ill effects.

Through all this emergency he was attended to without having charged a single centavo. The following people deserve a commendation for responding to an emergency without consideration of any reward or remuneration.

1. The management of the MRT for maintaining complete medical facilities and trained personnel who can attend to this kind of emergency.

2. Camacho, the MRT employee who had the presence of mind to immediately attend to the needs of the passengers.

3. The ambulance of Lifeline with its medical team.

The timely action of all the persons concerned averted the death or possible coma of a victim of heart attack.

What we have mentioned above are like what a life is saved or a disaster averted because of the concerted efforts by fellow Filipinos. They are reasons when there is hope for our country.

—RAMUELA TOLENTINO, 2/F Sawyer Plaza, corner Ayala Avenue Street and Benny Road, Makati City

Theology of Ateneo's win over La Salle

I WOULD like to comment on Al Mendoza's thoughts on "religion" in relation to the Ateneo De La Salle rivalry which he expressed in his column titled, "Yes, this is serious." (PDI, 9/27/03)

I disagree with Mendoza's conclusion that "God had assisted De La Salle to win" the first semifinals game of this season against Ateneo and that "only God's hand could have altered the trajectory" of Rich Alvarez's miscalculation (possibly due to physical exhaustion) and let La Salle's tight defense thus caused Ateneo to miss.

Simply this: unenthusiastic interest usually in his team's cause, no doubt. But he played a spectacular game because he developed his stamina, practiced hard and pursued the fighting spirit needed to lead his team to their lone victory this season over the Blazer team.

When a good match proves to God to help his team win, he is wrong. God has been prepared his team members physically and mentally for the game and that he has drilled them well. He does not ask or expect God to "play favorites." He employs God to help His campaign by His limit.

Sometimes the team's best is not good enough. There again, sometimes, it is.

When the Ateneo basketball team won its championship last year, Joel Torres did not say, "This proves that I am the greatest coach in the league!" or "Ateneo is the best team!" All he did was to thank God for giving and sustaining all their lives, acknowledging that without God, they are nothing. He expressed his gratitude to God for blessing the players with His grace so they could play their best, which resulted in ultimate victory.

I am certain that Jamil did not mean, "God made the Ateneo team win." He simply declared that through the achievements of the Ateneo players prevailing against seemingly insurmountable odds and offering their praise to their Creator, God was glorified. This is consistent with the guiding principle that the Ateneo motto have instilled in their students for many generations, "*Ad majorem Dei gloriam*": For the greater glory of God.

—JESSY PAN, principal skydiver cast

Monarchy in the Philippines

I DIDN'T realize that we have become a monarchy. High positions in government are now inherited by descendants of the present occupants, just like the rulers of olden monarchies. In the latter, the titles of duke, duchesses, baron, earls, etc. are passed on to their children. In the Philippines, the positions of senators are now passed on to the offspring of the senators.

Recent female senator has been observed for actor Bong Revilla who is to replace his father, Sen. Ramon Revilla Sr. What are the qualifications and achievements of Bong Revilla to merit such regard?

To top it, the daughter of another senator is now an inherit heir to that's title and position. Lawyer Pia Cayetano-Sebastian, wife's daughter of the late Sen. Renato Cayetano, wants to get the slot in the Lakas party's senatorial ticket that Cayetano has been but father's. What has she done to deserve being a senator?

The Philippine Senate used to be an august, respected body populated by brilliant statesmen and leaders of the likes of Manuel Quezon, Sergio Osmeña, Claro Recto, Jose Laurel, Lorenzo Tañada, Jose Diokno and Benigno Aquino Jr. Not anymore. With the likes of Revilla, Robert Jaworski, Gregorio Honasan, Nicanor Perlas, Maria Luisa Ejercito and Teresita Ortega populating our Senate, its reputation has sunk to the depths.

—ATTAGAN SABERNIO, reynaldo.sabernio@dot.co.gov

LETTERS

Publicize actual projects completed

THE POLITICAL season has unofficially begun with President Macapagal-Arroyo proclaiming her worthiness to run in May 2004, and four other aspirants eyeing the most powerful seat in Malacañang, too.

Let us remember, however, the recent study that 20-30 percent of public officials (one out of every three) have been actually corrupt, stashing away about $48 billion, an amount more than enough to pay our foreign debt—worst, the remaining 70 percent chose to turn a blind eye to it!

Let's ask these rotten ex-taken cents the sovereign power to choose leaders. I challenge all incumbent officials, national and local, to publish in major dailies their list of actual and implemented projects, events, programs, infrastructures vis-à-vis their working budget.

I want to know. The public needs to know. It is our right to know.

Non-publication of their statement can mean:

(a) They don't want to cooperate.

(b) They have something to hide.

(c) Their constituents may perceive them as the alleged corrupt officials.

(d) They have been true, not to their pledge of public service, but to self-service.

Most importantly, it means they do not deserve anybody's vote in next year's election. Yes many thieves spoil the country's goods.

—CARLOS E. MOLER, senior consultant, Ateneo Center for Continuing Education, 13/6/F delaCosta Bldg., Salcedo Village, Makati City

Why Sin voted for Ramos in 1992

PLEASE allow us to add a page to the political life of Jaime Cardinal Sin, which seems to be missing in your editorial titled "Shifts," when you wrote: "Sin tried to thwart the weight of the Church behind his opposition to the presidential candidacy of Gen. Fidel Ramos, probably because he was a Protestant and was certain moral issues. Despite the Church opposition, Ramos won."

"Eddie, I voted for you!" These were the exact words by which Sin greeted Gen. Fidel Ramos when he invited him to a private breakfast in Villa Sur Miguel a few days after the elections. Pleasantries and an exchange of experiences followed in an atmosphere of total friendship and trust.

What happened? It is not a secret that Sin was hoping to have a Catholic for the president of the Philippines, nonetheless, he was more concerned with the "good of the Filipino people and of the nation" than the religiosity of the candidate. This became most evident during the three or four private meetings we arranged and accompanied Ramos to present and to explain his programs of governance to Sin. These meetings were cordial, like among old friends. After all, it was the Radio Veritas' call of Sin that mobilized Edsa I as the last resort against a dictator and to protect the lives of former Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and General Ramos.

About two weeks before the elections, the supporters of Ramos had a series of visit backs. They sought Speaker Ramon Mitra, the favorite presidential candidate of the Catholic hierarchy, using the Congress printing press for his campaign materials.

This was a golden opportunity to convince Sin to say he was in favor of Ramos. The following morning, my wife and I asked to have breakfast with Sin and since Bayaba was not available, Sister Miguel, she asked her to the presence of all the people: "Brother, what happened yesterday afternoon?" The answer was unequivocal, "Oh no, Your Eminence, I saw in the Congress printing press piles of campaign materials of Ramos with call back tab."

This was the political turning point for Sin. He told us to cut loose another meeting with Ramos as soon as possible, because he felt that the country could be saved better by a Protestant.

The meeting was arranged immediately. Unfortunately Ramos could not come on account of an explosion in Zamboanga City that required his presence, nonetheless he sent his representative, Ambassador Emmanuel Pelaez, Rafael Alunan and Jaime Bautista. Many people still underlined, came to the rescue of the new found ally and followed Ramos.

One more word. In the beginning, there was not much opposition from the moral issues." Ramos clearly stated that the method of population control "will be left to the decision of couples and that he would legislate "having" under a lotto button. He stood on moral issues was explained at length to many Catholic bishops gathered in the house of an archbishop.

—ROGER MO-ESPOY PEDROSCIM, Grand Shepherd Spiritual Center, Emerald Hills, Batangas City, Cmo. Sanfrancisco City

Weeping for the country

READING this, some lawyers might regarding the approach of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. evidenced my belief that the elected leaders of our country think only of themselves and their vested interests, and are oblivious to the ill consequences of their action. We elected our leaders hoping that they would lead us with dignity to prosperity and a better life. Sadly, as we can see, they have failed us.

This impeachment will drive more much needed foreign investments and will eventually plunge this country deeper into poverty. Unlike Bernie, I do not cry for the Philippines. I weep for my countrymen.

—NELLA BALAGAPO, nbalagapo@hotmail.com

Trees had to be cut

THIS refers to the news item titled "Save the trees please." (PDI, 9/22/03)

Please be informed that the above-mentioned report were the subject of the letter of request dated June 24, 2003 of a Mr. Taduro, secretary of the mayor, DIC, Ms. Valeriano Darales Central, Quezon City, requesting clearance to cut down trees to give way to the road widening of Tandang Sora corner Visayas Avenue, Quezon City. The request was acted upon by this office in letter last July 24, 2003 to Taduro and Ms. Victoria Co. Pilar, barangay chair of Pasong Tamo, advising them that the head of the political subdivision, having jurisdiction over the area, has the authority to issue a permit to cut the trees for public safety pursuant to Presidential Decree 953.

Verification was conducted by our personnel showed that two trees—an acacia and a tamarind tree—were cut. The remaining mango tree located within a private property was still intact but will be affected by the project. The owner of the property where the mango tree is located swore a letter interposing no objection to the cutting of the tree.

—LEONARDO C. DAVIS, regional executive director, Department of Environment and Natural Resources-NCR, Congressional Plaza Hills II Congressional Ave., Project 8, Quezon City

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonio

Agri exec says Cabinet backs veggie imports

By Vincent Cabreza
INQ Northern Luzon Bureau

SAGUD CITY—Bureau of Plant Industry Director Eli Guspar Adlawan said here on Friday that the government is success-staging vegetable imports from China to obtain better trade leverage from Australia.

Adlawan said farm leaders blamed for the unabated importation of vegetables from other countries, which displaced local farm products from Metro Manila markets, are "misguided."

Benguet Gov. Raul Molintas also accused Adlawan of allowing the entry of samples of Chinese carrots weighing 25,000 kilograms, despite a verbal instruction from President Macapagal-Arroyo to 2002 to impose vegetable imports.

But Adlawan told reporters that these import samples were part of an arrangement reached by the DFI and the departments of agriculture, foreign affairs and trade and industry during their visit.

He was referring to a June 15 conference, which addressed the country's trade concerns with China.

Maintaining said government trade experts were concerned about the free flow of Australian vegetables when the Australian government refused to accept Philippine mangoes, Adlawan said.

The government had planned to sue the Australian government before the World Trade Organization for erecting this "trade barrier."

Adlawan said the samples were released for entry to test the storage.

The government no longer opposed the entry of more vegetable samples from China, although the sons proved that Chinese imports would, in turn, well replace the cheaper imports in the country's high-end markets, he said.

Australian vegetables have been the choice commodities of Philippine hotels, airlines and restaurant chains as well as by institutions like the Asian Development Bank, ADB papers said.

The agreement to encourage vegetable importation from China was hailed in spite of Ms Macapagal's policy announcement in Benguet that vegetable imports would immediately stop, Adlawan said.

He clarified that Ms Macapagal's order did not violate the WTO agreement by Australia, which the government refused to accept Philippine mangoes, Adlawan said.

"We couldn't issue an order that would violate the terms of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trades at the WTO," Adlawan said.

Farmers who attended the 4th Agro-Expo conference were opposed by Adlawan's justification. Molintas and Mr. Provincial Governor Jovito Attienza had been asserting Ms Macapagal's moratorium order whenever they lobbied for stronger policies on agriculture.

Outside the BPI office, some 20 Benguet farmers from the province rally calling for Adlawan's ouster. They said Adlawan's problems were partly to blame for the food pilfering lawsuit and four DA officials against commercial importers.

Last month, Lawmaker was cited for graft by one of the importers for not favorably acting on the strength of Members' complaint.

Adlawan said the recently performed to make with China because of its bigger labor requirements.

The PA-DBS, consolidation union of the Joint 14 meeting shows that 116 members Democrats a disturbing development because of "the liberal conduct against it will accord Chinese vegetable imports."

The document pointed out that China's security store domestic whenever it pushes for the cause "liberalization treaty" of its products in the Philippines.

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- Fund-Raising
- Common Rules and Regulations
- Election Day Operations

The workshop will run on **Wednesday, November 26 to Friday, November 28, 2003,** from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Ayala Avenue, Makati.

For reservations or additional information, please call Lala or Shalini at telephone numbers 836-5818 and 833-1814.

POLISTRAT INTERNATIONAL
Unit 2302, 2/F OMNICITRA Building
San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Bulacan mayor faces suit for not paying for vehicles

CIRIACITA—Hagonoy Mayor Nilda Ople is facing a P50-million suit for refusing to pay for the 21 vehicles supplied to the City-based company for his term in Bulacan.

The 3rd Regional Trial Court Judge Marina Dumlao Jr. denied the motion of Ople, not of Property Affair Secretary Rico Dela Cruz-Dumlao that Ople's first term.

The trial was set to continue with the defendants' grounds that Ople and the municipality of Hagonoy could not be sued based on the principle that "the government cannot be sued without its consent."

But Dumlao ruled in his resolution that there was no consent between Ople and the municipal government. A contract can be taken as a form of consent.

In an order dated Oct. 20, Dumlao summoned that provincial, city and municipalities such as Hagonoy "are subject to suit even when engaged in governmental functions because their charter provides that they can sue and be sued."

Ople, the judge said, was sued both in his official and personal capacity.

RB Surplus accused Ople and the Hagonoy municipal government of refusing to pay for the 21 vehicles, including two dump trucks, worth P10.6 million.

Ready Rent-to-Own Car Center (RRC) said the vehicles were shipped to Hagonoy from June to September 2000. Until delivery, the added, had not been settled.

Despite repeated demands, she added, the defendants did not settle their obligation.

But Ople, through his lawyers Joselito Reyes, maintained there was no contract or transaction that bound the defendants to RB Surplus.

They stressed that there was no single written contract or document that showed such a transaction existed.

For the transaction to be valid and binding, the defendants said, there should have been prior accreditation of suppliers and public bidding and the contract should have been ratified by the Municipal Council.

They said these requirements were allegedly followed.

Cruz said Ople contacted their business office here to add 2000 and expressed his intention to buy machinery and equipment to forward in a project in Hagonoy.

Despite her "failed frustration," Cruz said the latter entered into a contract with Ople "after the latter's repeated assurances that public funds were already released to it."

After the vehicles were delivered, Cruz said the defendants did not pay them.

RB Surplus now wrote the defendant's office, Secretary Ople "to intercede and help convince her son to pay the outstanding obligation," Cruz said.

"In this regard to the failure of the defendant mayor caused her to reconsider my intention to immediately sue and file a case against the council," she said.

Still, she added, "not a single centavo was tendered." Suppose *R. Sales, PDI Corpus Bureau*

Roundup

NLRC sheriff cleared

CEBU CITY, AUGUST CITY—The Office of the Ombudsman in Cebu has cleared before and guilt charges filed by a certain Alberto Hipolito Jose Diaz, sheriff of the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) from his decision dated July 25. Ombudsman investigating officer Bernadette Cruz declared that there is no evidence to establish Diaz violated the P15,000 alleged bribe money. The accused Ted Diaz had demanded P15,000 from him in exchange for the removal of a labor case which he lost in that year. The NLRC ordered the bribe to be returned. PDI/19 07 *Apolinar Zuñiga, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

School exec suspended

CORNACO CITY—Misbehaving principal is under detention for suspected for six months. Executive Dr. Nelson Dizon attended Dr. Evelyn Balaan for misconduct. Balaan had been accused of having the time to conduct business at the Department of Education here, allegedly depriving her qualified constituents. Balaan, through his counsel, filed a motion for reconsideration, but the appointing authority's motion was denied. Executive Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan confirmed that Dr. Dizon's decision to suspend Balaan for six months. Balaan is under the "intelligence police of executive." *Charlie Galvez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Agri lacks funds-Angara

LAGAG CITY—Many half of the poor rural PEZA-labor force in the country are still short of farmers and fishermen who should not be discussed this year, according to Sen. Edgardo Angara. The government's failure to sufficiently funds towards under the Agrarian Reform and Fisheries Modernization Act from meeting Majestic rice and sugar to labor-intensive farmers and business entrepreneurs at the 8th Mindanao Food Congress on Thursday, Angara said based on the law, some P83 billion should have already been allocated for Africa in the past five years, but the amount released, to date, was only P52 billion. *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Papua New Guinea visitors

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Papua New Guinea officials visited this city Thursday to observe how the fishing industry here is doing so far. The delegation was led by James Maladi, governor of Madang province. He was accompanied by his adviser Matthew Gau, CEO of Papua New Guinea Investment and Investment Department. He held meetings with Thursday relationship to increase the fishing boats from Papua New Guinea to this province. *Apolinar Zuñiga, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Countdown for justice

NAPLE

11 is usually 6:00 days before Napolitan president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo does it cold blood. The political scandal, police officer Guillermo Tangka, convicted drug-dealer and gang leader in the custody of the police.

World Bank praises RP for 'zero-problem' projects

DAVAO CITY—For the first time since 1995, the Philippine has maintained "zero-problem" loan implementation of World Bank-assisted projects.

An assessment made by the WB of its Philippines' projects until this year the highest the country has rated in years.

"The Philippines program has zero problem projects, down from four (projects) as FY02 and from a high of 11 four years ago," the WB's Country Office in the Philippines said in a newsletter issued for the second quarter of the year.

Because of this, the WB said it has agreed in coming for the Philippines in terms of project implementation.

The Philippines "rose from the bottom-tier" it shared with Vietnam in terms of implementation pace in June 2001 to fourth place in June 2003, ahead of Indonesia and Vietnam and slightly behind China.

WB country director Robert Vance Pulley lauded the performance of the Philippines in the pace and implementation of the projects assisted by the lending agency.

"Despite difficulties with the country's tight fiscal position, the Philippines was able to make a turnaround in the implementation of projects," Pulley said.

He attributed the good performance to the so-called project preparation by the line agencies and the more proactive support of oversight agencies like the Department of Budget and Management, National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Finance, Commission on audit, and the President's Priority Programs and Overseas Development Assistance Project Office.

Pulley said the WB has already disbursed $200 million, reserved through government agencies and banks for 2003. Last year, it disbursed only $126 million.

The Land Bank of the Philippines remains the agency with the highest disbursement of $343 million for the Child and Resource project. *Jaed D. Jacamilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Wife claims victim of 'clash' in Laguna a farm worker

MAJAYJAY, Laguna—The rebel claimed in police and military reports as having been killed in an encounter with Army soldiers in Lucban, Quezon last Tuesday, was a farm worker.

Relatives and neighbors of Mario Mercado, who died of multiple bullet wounds in his body, denied that the 36-year-old man would readily join the hunt in Lucban early morning, saying, take a jeepney to Barangay Ipang where he left a horse for pasture, and ride the horse to Barangay Bitin in Majayjay Laguna where he hunted.

His wife, Rosita, showed Mercado's residence certificate from Barangay Bitin as proof that he was a civilian. She said Mercado left the house last Sunday at around 6 a.m., carrying a bolo and wearing a maid long with boots and sombrero for hunting and arrived home everyday at around 7 p.m. She said he did not leave home for long periods of time.

Col. Virgilio Espinoli, head of the Army's 1st Infantry Battalion, said soldiers who were conducting patrol operations found Mercado's body beside a creek in the boondocks, a few kilometers away from where the reported encounter took place.

Laguna police director Senior Supt. Isabelo Torres said Quezon policemen and Army troops were conducting an operation near the Laguna-Quezon boundary when they chanced upon 10 heavily armed men.

Soldiers said the armed group, believed to be New People's Army rebels, quickly fled in chaos, prompting them to retaliate.

Christie Cabreros and Marlon Ramos, *Southern Luzon Bureau*

Grim tales of death hound 'desaparecidos' kin

By Nyco D. Bunuan
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MASKED dancers do trick at Session Road on the eve of Halloween to drive away the spirits of commercialism and globalization here (pic at left).

Masked dancers drive away WTO ghosts from Baguio

Rebels reflect on the heroism of their dead comrades

70-foot hole on Edsa turns into grave for 8

By Luige del Puerto and Christine Pabua

MANDALUYONG City Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr. yesterday asked the City Engineer's Office to suspend the building permit of the construction firm that dug a 70-foot hole on Edsa, where a jeepney filled with passengers fell on Saturday night.

But Abalos clarified that based on city documents, Globe Asiatic followed all the rules set by the National Building Code when it started digging the foundations of a condominium, a joint venture between the firm and Pag-ibig.

"I have asked the city engineer's office to suspend for the moment the building permit of Globe Asiatic until after a thorough investigation is concluded," he said in a press interview.

Arrested trials, however, the driver of the jeepney has contended that while Edsa it was submerged by a speeding truck into the hole, according to one of the survivors.

The 12 passengers of the unidentified jeepney came from a religious gathering in Cubao, Quezon City.

The jeepney then went over the gutter and plunged into the construction site, which was deep enough to bury a five-story building, police said.

Eight people died in the accident: Rosario Nicanoro, Ignacia Bacanara, jeepney driver Reynaldo Dionisio, 50, Salvacion Soriano, 51, Ray Ryan Custodio, 9, Veronica Estrada, 47, Rosalio Jacinto and Gilbert Cadang, 42.

Meanwhile, Gaurence Ermano, 7, Ronald Fullerto, 38, Dionne Galvez, 14, Daniel Kristofe, 5, and Reggie Abella, 23, survived the fall, police said.

Reynaldo Dungal of Barangay Mabolang said that when he got to the site, the driver was still alive and even asked for oxygen. "The driver later died.

Dionisio Bayangos was the first to be pulled out of the wreckage, but he too died, police said.

Rescuer groups from the Metro Manila Development Authority, the Philippine Red Cross, as well as residents from Barangay Wack Wack II, Mandaluyong and Barangay Ugong in Pasig City responded to the call for help.

According to Traffic Operations Division Angelito Abejar de Rivo, the MMDA rescue team arrived in the area as soon as the report came out.

According to SPO2 Nilda Bacon of the Mandaluyong police, it took the rescuers an hour to locate the first survivor, Gaurence Ermano, 7.

Bacon said the rescuers supplied down the shaft and used an improvised ladder to hoist the victims.

By midnight, all the victims had been retrieved, Nilgad-Ed Dino said.

Mandaluyong will provide P20,000 for each victim.

The mayor has learned that this was not the first time a vehicle had an accident at the site. Perfecto Yasay Jr., a guard at the work site, said that was another sign, a man lost his brother and drowned into their pool. With a report from Edgar Allan Gendovoza, trainee

TWO kids on Edsa, what a passenger jeepney fell Saturday night, killing 8 passengers...in deep enough to fit a 5-story building. Inset, rescuers hoist one of the children. AFP, inset photo

MetroBriefs

Brothers slain

SANTO Tomas, 27, and his brother Bonjo, 22, were stabbed to death in a cockpit in Mawitan, Sabangan, night. POSSE Police yesterday said that the brothers, along with Alfred Ramonada and three other friends, had just come from the cockpit and were on their way home when they came upon Gi young men in front of the Danag Non-Elementary School at 10:45 p.m. Posse said a certain "Dawn" then hired to pull out his knife and, upon seeing Jones he did. Responding policemen arrested three suspects — John Tandalayan, 23, Jermiel Candelario, 19, Christopher Bernas, 20 and a 16-year-old boy. Alison Tandoc Jr.

Murderous cousin

BARANGAY workman Roy Gadrok was just doing his job when he tried to stop a fight involving four cousins in Quezon City on Saturday night that when Gadrok tried to quell, Amo, Ernesto, Roberto Gonzales, 3 cigarette Lacsingal and Jojo Lacsingal made their knives on his head. Gadrok, Barangay Commonwealth at about 11:30 p.m., the four men turned on the workman and began stabbing and stabbing him. Police managed to arrest Amo, 27. Alison Tandoc Jr.

Thieves cheese cab over P53

AN SUV Agusto yesterday morning and only P53 when three robbers boarded his taxi and commanded another to Sampaloc, Manila. When the suspects learned that he had only that much cash, they ordered to another Pinoy and at his East, a Toyota Corolla (PCP-388), and drove off with the victim's Rizal, 45, of Sitio Pulo, Bulacan. Arrested on the victim that he could identify the suspects if he sees them again. Dave Baldoncello

In jail on All Saints'

JOSE Corazon, a cook at the De Ridad Medical Center, found himself behind bars on All Saints' Day after he reportedly beat his lawyer. Suspect, 42, of Cavite, was allegedly drunk when he used a kitchen knife to stab 2 inmates' hangers. Police said lawyer, a hospital security guard, accosted the cook and his friends when the victim warned that they were showing up the wrong room of the dietary department. When the guard began questioning the men, Corazon got upset and stabbed lawyer in the face. Christine Pabs

Mistaken identity

ALMOST police identified as a case of mistaken identity, Manuel Cuarto, 46, on Saturday night was killed by Jose Ruben, 35, who used a butcher's knife to stab the victim in the chest. PO2 Joseph Dimayuga said that at about 11 p.m., Ruben got angry when his brother told him that someone named Lyan Jones already drunk. Ruben and a friend confronted Dayan Street, Cavite, Cuarto by and came upon Cuarto. Without a word, Ruben pulled out the knife, stabbed Cuarto and casually walked away. When the neighbors learned of the incident, they rushed him to the hospital but he died on the way. Alison Tandoc Jr.

Manila goes after illegal...

Continued on A 20

ago but they suddenly stopped. They appear to have become stuck in their improvement plan. They should notify their residents about improvement of the sewer pipes," said Atienza.

Atienza said that the asbestos-lined pipes which were lining sewer in Sampaloc in Tondo were installed 30 years ago by National Housing Authority.

He stressed that about 20 informal settlers had been displaced to repair 235 reported pipe leaks from these pipes and were digging up and disconnecting illegal connections, some of which pass through drainage ditches beside the polluted estero pipe.

On Oct. 23, residents from Sampaloc, Malabon, Tondo, Caloocan and other adjoining cities began pouring in to hospitals, complaining of vomiting, knee bowel movements and headaches.

Silence returns to cemeteries

Continued on A 20

Gilda Sibla, 58, said that she had been selling food normally at the same cemetery since she was 30 and this year was the worst time for sales.

While the number of graves increased, she said, her earnings decreased.

Dora Ariyola driver Ilan, 48, was disappointed that he only made P400 last Saturday. It was half of what he made last year.

"More cemetery goers chose to walk instead," he related.

"What did not look to the cemetery was made that made the already narrow pathways a lot less passable.

2 months in punishment cell

By Margaux Dela

"WHAT IS to still make this happen?"

The wife of drug convict Wu Boat Yuan, also known as Peter Co, said that even though the Mandaluyong City court already ordered the release of her husband from solitary confinement, Co still remained inside the chief jailer's cell.

Lily Lin, through a spokesperson, said Mandaluyong City Regional Trial Court Branch 207 had ordered the immediate release of Co on his cell in Building 13 for lack of due process in placing him in solitary confinement.

In addition, she said, the court had directed prison officials to subject Co to a medical examination at the New Bilibid Prisons hospital.

Instead of complying, Bureau of Corrections (Bucor) officials filed a motion for reconsideration less the court denied this, according to Co's wife.

In the court order dated Oct. 8, Judge Philip Ajanado gave weight to Co's position that he is under fear a "psychiatric misconduct" to a humiliation was "considered punishment."

It also threw out the claim of the Bucor that it was Co who requested his transfer to the disciplinary cell.

Co was placed in solitary confinement after prison officials allegedly found illegal drugs in his possession.

Lin said that Bucor officials should just admit to the court's decision instead of resisting, considering it is out of pride.

"My husband does not deserve to suffer inside the cramped facilities, where he is denied visitors," Lin implored. "I'm asking the Bucor officials to have a heart and return him to Building 13."

The boycotts tried to reach Bucor Chief Director Santiago and Supt. Francisco Alvarado but, according to their secretaries, they were in Davao attending a conference.

THE BIGGER of victims lie amid debris after a jeepney they were in fell into a 16-foot hole in Mandaluyong. (See story on Page A23.)

MAYOR IRKED

Manila goes after illegal water taps

By Tarra Quismundo

AT LEAST four deaths and 339 people sickened by contaminated water for the Manila City government and the Maynilad Water Services Inc. crackdown on water-against illegal water connections—the main reason behind the recent outbreak of acute gastrointestinal illnesses in Tondo.

"We do not want to let finger pointing to this point, but we expect Maynilad to step on their toes," said Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

He had earlier said that he asks for "enough show of cooperative manner from Maynilad and Manila Health," as only the outbreak could've happen.

Maynilad said it already intensified repairs of reported leaks and illegal connections in the affected areas following the outbreak.

Maynilad President Rafael Manuel III said in a field inspection in Tondo last Friday that they would be disconnecting reported illegal connections in the area, "to the extent of our capacities."

He also appealed to the government to assist Maynilad in implementing the law pertaining to water connections, adding that those who install illegal connections should be held accountable.

To this, Atienza said that City Hall would direct the Manila Health Department and the City Engineer's Office to strictly ensure that water line connections are legal and proper.

But the mayor also called on the Maynilad to be "conscious of their responsibilities as a water concessionaire," which includes maintaining the quality of water and keeping the water supply safe for drinking.

"They were very strong in implementing their water improvement program two years

Silence returns to cemeteries

By Tarra Quismundo and Edison Tandoc Jr.

THE DEAD can now again rest in peace.

A month of anticipation and planning for the commemoration of the Days of Valera and Souls have ended, and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza is smiling about it.

"It was well-organized aside from some slight infractions," said Atienza, who made rounds of Manila North and South Cemeteries Saturday.

The "slight infractions," according to Atienza, included those vehicles which managed to sneak into the South Cemetery.

Truckloads of garbage also piled up in these lands of the dead.

Despite these, Atienza said their planning for the annual event paid off. He congratulated the police for "a good job" in securing Manila's cemeteries.

But not everybody is happy.

Fifty-year-old Nimmy Leiby, a snacks and soft-drinks vendor, lamented that "fewer" people went to the Sangandaan Cemetery in Caloocan City this year.

Last year, Leiby said she sold 23 cans of soda. This year it barely reached 12 cans.

Worse, she lost three boxes of cigarettes to thieves.

CHILDREN visit tombs inside the North Cemetery for marked candles, which they will sell for recycling.

Impeach rap raises issue of abuse of power

From page A1

and upholding the legitimacy of Mr Macapagal-Arroyo's election.

Without having to discuss the constitutionality of the second impeachment complaint or the substance of the complaint (more than to say/say), it is sufficient, for the purpose of this article, to examine the constitutional crisis triggered by the second complaint from the larger perspective of the stability of Philippine constitutional democracy.

Since the toppling of the Marcos regime in 1986 and the Estrada administration in 2001, Filipinos have developed a strong itch to cut short the terms of regimes either through extra-legal means (such as two People Power (or -lege) or in the case of Estrada, through impeachment trial that is against Edsa II.

Attack shifts

And now the target of attack has shifted from the presidency to the Supreme Court.

The constitutional initiation stage for impeachment is the forum of Representatives, and in the case of the Estrada impeachment, the assault is directed at the Supreme Court, the same defenestrators of the three co-equal organs of government.

This shift of target is what makes the clash between the House and the Supreme Court different from other constitutional conflicts involving separation of powers.

The assault on the Supreme Court highlights the awkwardness into which the conflict has pushed the court. The court holds the constitutional mandate of being the arbiter of constitutional conflict involving separation of powers.

An attack on the court emanated from the House, which initiated the second impeachment complaint, professor puts it in the awkward position of having to defend itself from what the Chief Justice perceives to be a breach of the court's independence.

The Chief Justice has defended recently the court's territory and jurisdiction when he questioned the constitutionality of the second complaint. Those who disdained the complaint in the House have criticized the Chief Justice for his views invoking the constitutional defense shielding the court from encroachment from the two other departments, although at this stage, the executive department is not the opponent.

If the court's arbiter role in the countervailing scheme of checks and balances it being attacked, the true law of the survival requires two institutions to defend themselves by asserting themselves with the constitutional weapons available to them.

Like a state or regime under attack by, for example, a military coup. First, the court has the right to defend itself and even use its power and mandate to pronounce on the constitutional issues, including those involving the court itself and the Chief Justice.

Feeble argument

The argument that when the court issues resolutions and judgments on such constitutional issues is self-serving is a feeble argument.

If, for example, the court does not issue a ruling on the petitions questioning the constitutionality of the transmittal of the second complaint to the Senate, who then is the authoritative institution to declare what the law is?

Clearly not Congress nor its individual members. The failure of the court to rule on the issue of unconstitutional would constitute an abandonment of its constitutional function and responsibility as the final arbiter of constitutional conflict, a function that is now being hijacked by a pack of audacious congressional adventurers who have mounted the first onslaught on the Supreme Court in the history of Philippine democracy, in the guise of exercising Congress' power of oversight to the detriment of public funds and to asserting its investigative powers "in aid of legislation"—a notion that has been much abuse and ranciding at the hands of Congress.

A Supreme Court, with its armory of constitutional weapons and resources in determining breaches of walls dividing the three departments, that cannot defend itself and cannot deploy its weapons...is a pathetic court.

Against the claim of the instigators of the impeachment complaint that the "arrogance" of the Chief Justice in defending the court's territory from encroachment provoked the launching of the complaint, the Chief Justice raised a constitutional principle based on judicial autonomy from capricious and reckless investigations of its affairs.

The invocation of this principle was in response to the investigation into the JDF which in the course of the hearings of the House committee on justice appeared to be heading not toward an inquiry "in aid of legislation" but toward an expedition to uncover evidence to establish a basis for the impeachment complaint.

Inquisitorial

It is the manner of questioning in the committee of the auditors and representatives of the court...the Chief Justice noted that the questioning was getting to be inquisitorial.

It is a well known fact that congressional investigations are a harrowing experience in which members of Congress do not relish a chance to humiliate and embarrass their political opponents.

The Chief Justice saw through this abuse of the congressional power of oversight. By instructing court officials not to submit to this humiliating procedure, the Chief Justice acted to defend the court from being subjected to indignities that members of Congress have routinely heaped on those summoned to its hearings.

In this conflict between the Supreme Court and the House, the history of legislative abuses in investigations, hearings on the budget and even confirmation of presidential appointments galvanizes public opinion against the House.

This is why Davide and the court have become the rallying point against the abuses of the legislature. The impeachment complaint has become the catalyst of the taste of congressional abuses...an issue which is no important as the constitutional questions and the substance of the complaint itself.

'Jueteng' alive but task force dead

From page A1

words again.

Lina has abolished the Department of Interior and Local Government's Task Force Jericho after six months of trying to wipe out jueteng and other forms of illegal gambling in the country. The abolition took effect on Nov. 1.

Last year, Lina said he would resign if he could not curb illegal gambling in one year. the deadline expired on May 4 but nothing was heard from him. Instead, were swirling at the time that he was out for his campaign to run unopposedly in not making "big strides" in the anti-crime and illegal gambling drives.

Lina marked seven top Philippine National Police officials, including Deputy Director Gen. Edgar Aglipay and Chief Supt. Bernardito Barroga, in July 2002 because jueteng allegedly flourished in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

The interior secretary adopted a "strike-three-and-you're-out" policy that called for the relief of police commanders following three successful operations against jueteng conducted by a separate unit in their jurisdictions.

Jericho leader Chief Supt. Manuel Gringo yesterday came to Lina's defense, explaining that while jueteng may still be here, it has been substantially reduced.

"It was really an uphill battle because the jueteng culture is already embedded, especially in Luzon," he told the Inquirer.

Calogon explained that Jericho was abolished not because of its purported failure. "It was really intended to last only for six months and it had done its job."

Under the PNP Reform Law, the official said the task force would serve to prepare local executives for their primary responsibility to curb illegal gambling.

In the course of its operations, Jericho had some of its men slapped with criminal and administrative charges for their alleged involvement in illegal activities such as extortion. Calogon said those cases were commonplace for a group tasked with a very complicated job.

With the campaign now resting solely on the shoulders of local governments, he warned that jueteng might proliferate with the coming 2004 elections.

"It's possible that jueteng would surge a comeback because the elections are

Jueteng in Nueva Ecija

Jueteng continues to thrive in many parts of Nueva Ecijas, belying police officials' claim that the illegal numbers game has been stopped.

Reports gathered by the Inquirer showed that jueteng dozens were held in almost every town in the province twice or thrice daily.

Police officials admit that "guerilla" (clandestine) or "small-scale" operations have continued with the use of tactics that operators have devised for subverters (bet collectors) and other final collectors of results across.

"Bet collections and draws are now being done discreetly on the outskirts of the town, where [jueteng personnel] would not incite attention," said Supt. Prudencio de la Cruz, deputy provincial police director.

The operations is also called "kangaroo" type as draws and sometimes keep from one venue to another, said De la Cruz, who also heads the anti-jueteng task force in Nueva Ecijas.

"The exact place of resistance is relayed by the managers to cabo through text messages at the last possible minute to avoid any leak," he said.

Once they met, bet money changes hands. The winning number is announced and they quickly disperse and disappear, "all these happening in just a few minutes," de la Cruz said. "They may be wily, but we'll get them," he said.

The cease prices of jueteng has continued to harass police officials, who are facing prospects of relief.

Earlier, Gov. Rodolfo Ilgbayan asked Lina to relieve Senior Supt. Jesus Manuboy, police provincial director. With a report from Nelson Flores

House tells SC: We are not under you

From page A1

it provides an impartial analyst of how the JDF funds were disbursed.

"If our lawmakers would agree to take back the items to the Chamber committee on justice where they could review the COA report again without needing the issue and creating too much trouble for society, I don't know if that's good. The COA is the constitutional body authorized to audit all these branches of government and its findings are supported by the public," Bunye said.

"They cite jurisprudence congressmen can review their complaint. If they do, I can agree with the COA findings."

Position paper

Bunye said the House's position paper would deal only with four basic principles.

First, the 1987 Constitution provides for the accountability of public officials and the mode of impeachment for such officials in the Chief Justice.

Second, the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judiciary also involves the principle of checks and balances between the three co-equal branches of government.

Third, the initiation of impeachment complaints is the exclusive jurisdiction of the House as provided for under the Constitution.

Fourth, "impeachment is a remedy but form conferred upon the House by the sovereign people as a way to check public officials."

De Venecia said rule reliance on the separation of powers to stop the transmittal of the Arroyo impeachment against Davide to the Senate was a limited view of what the Constitution intended.

"Separation of powers should not be misconstrued as having the three great co-equal branches giving separate wars," he said.

In his radio interviews, Bunye pressed the House leadership to consider bringing the issue back to the committee level. In the meantime, he said, the scheduled oral arguments for the case on Nov. 5 "should be guided by a plenary understanding of the issues."

Lakas members

Lakas spokesperson Bebiano Alvarez said the party leadership had reminded its members to force members to drop their names from the impeachment complaint, but he did not name them in deference to the members' request for anonymity until Congress resumes sessions on Nov. 10.

The five were included in a list by Lakas members—Manila Rep. Ernesto Nieva, Parañaque Rep. Eduardo Joaquin Buhaton Roy, Valenzuela Rep. Sherwin Gatchalian, Bulacan Rep. Rolando Fortuno and Bulacan Rep. Reynaldo Nicolas—who had already withdrawn their signatures.

Other Lakas congressmen who signed the complaint were Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano Jr., Makilala Rep. Emmylou Taliño-Mendoza, Mandaue Rep. Felix Espinosa, Negros Occidental Rep. Jose Carlos Lacson, Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras, Albay Rep. Jose Aunte Salceda, Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis, Southern Leyte Rep. Aniceto Sulaik, Negros Oriental Rep. Herminia Teves, Bicol Rep. Rodolfo Ubaldo and Bukidnon Rep. Jesse Miguel Zaldivar.

Bid Henen Mitra (D, Leader Carlos Padilla (LDP, Nueva Vizcaya) said that, as of his latest count, 68 members of the House would still not withdraw their signatures.

Noting that he was the 95th signatory, Padilla said that every congressman had already backed out. He did not identify them.

"The impeachment of Davide now is considered void by such signatory and an amended or new one will make one look down," Padilla said.

Padilla said he was confident that the "minimum requirement" of 76 signatories will hold."

Under the rules, a vote by at least one-third or 76 of the 226-member House immediately convenes an impeachment complaint into Articles of Impeachment and it is automatically deemed transmitted to the Senate upon a two-thirds vote.

Rep. Michael John Duavit (NPC, Pasay) said that the Republican People's Coalition, which spearheaded the impeachment complaint, was holding firm.

"There was no change of mind by any member of the NPC and there will never be," Duavit said.

De Venecia's job

Other members of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democratic party took offense at the claim by anti-impeachment Rep. Antonio Cuenco (Second, Cebu City) that De Venecia would be assumed as Speaker if he allowed the Davide impeachment complaint to reach the Senate.

"The Speaker's post is not at stake here. Speaker De Venecia is no escapist," said Rep. Francisco Rogelio Lukin, Davao City).

Alfonso cited De Venecia was merely implementing the consensus of the House's multi-party caucus last week, where House leaders agreed not to recognize the high court's jurisdiction.

Alfonso also said it was the House's duty to initiate the Articles of Impeachment when Congress resumes sessions on Nov. 10.

Bunye said: "It rules that impeachment is a party issue it is subject political questionings is what should be the act of an individual."

Padilla noted that the estimated cost per voter "only exhibited the House's resolve to protect its powers of impeachment."

"Given those who originally did not sign actually signed later, when the Supreme Court dropped on how to unmuddying the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate," Padilla said.

Crisis provides opportunity for reunions

From page A1

brother Bryan, whose spots as co-chair of the Supreme Court Bar's at Justice committee and vice-chair of the bar and research committee have been a focal point in the current allegations of irregularities leveled against their brother.

Rodrigo "Rog" Ladrica, a consultant in a multilateral development agency, is coordinating the circulation of text messages and e-mails calling on congressmen to withdraw their signatures from the Davide impeachment papers.

Two decades ago, Ladrica said, no one would even think that this bunch of happy-go-lucky guys would one day be formed by world-class political interest.

A native of Bilabaran, Ladrica revealed that one of their "targets" is Bukidnon Rep. Jose Miguel "Migz" Zubiri, among the 17 members of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democratic who signed the impeachment.

Zubiri, also a UP graduate and already a Lakas stalwart at age 34, holds the distinction of being the only ruling congressman to have signed four impeachment complaints—three against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and one against Davide.

Another target is Rep. Dolores Balcazar-Cardenas of South Cotabato, who helped gather signatures for Davide's impeachment.

According to Ladrica, he is able to cross-check with the UP Batch-colleagues of the Filipinos in "Pinoy" is 9 months to which he, (Ma in Ill and Bryan are members).

Ilia Bonoli, a Pinoy Bond, "has set up two pro-Bonoli websites: http://www.pinoybonoli.com/ and http://www.pinoybonoli.com/ and http://www.pinoybonoli.com/ and

SPORTS

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Realtors stop late Beermen blitz

Adriano makes crucial steal as Sta. Lucia Realty lords it over in Group A

By Jun Navarro

FRANCIS Adriano anchored Nic Belasco's powerful come-from-behind triple as Sta. Lucia Realty turned back San Miguel Beer, 95-90, last night in the Samsung PBA Reinforced Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Adriano hassled the ball just as Belasco was about to launch a trey, paving the way for the Realtors to reassume their status of the top spot in Group A.

The Realtors finished the eliminations round with an 8-3 record. They will meet the No. 4 squad in the same division in a best-of-three quarterfinal series.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Quirimit heads cast of favorites /A23

■ Henman shocks Roddick /A26

SPORTS TV

Direct INJECTION
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TOTAL

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GO in elite company

Go named to Afro-Asian athletics council

HYDERABAD, India—Philippine international Track and Field Association president Go Teng Kok became a member of the Afro-Asian Joint Council for athletics here Saturday.

In a meeting between leaders of the Asian Athletic Association and the African Athletic Confederation, the two federations decided to reactivate the Joint Council, with the president, senior vice president, secretary general and the vice presidents of both groups as members.

Go, being one of the Asian group's five vice presidents, made it to the body that would decide when and where the second stage of the just-concluded 5th Afro-Asian Games would be held.

"The creation of the Joint Council is intended to foster closer cooperation and liaison between the AAA and the AAC," said Go. "Combined, Afro-Asia would be a major power in world athletics."

The Joint Council, he added, agreed that the Afro-Asian Games will become a quadrennial event and that the next edition will be hosted by an African country.

Go, who was chef de mission of the Asian contingent to the nine-day meet participated in, by more than 3,500 athletes and officials, said the Joint Council will convene next year to discuss the salient aspects of the 2nd Afro-Asian Games and other competitions and activities between the two continents.

"Eventually, it (Joint Council) would pave the way for more tournaments from which our athletes would benefit in terms of exposure," said Go. "Imagine our trackers competing against their counterparts from Kenya and the like; surely they'll learn and improve a lot."

India's Dr. Ilsorth Kalimuli, 3-Purpose, elected over the Joint Council meeting at the Hotel Taj Krishna. Also in attendance were AAC president Ahmed Mahrous Ballalla and Afro-Continental Athletic Federation representative for Africa Leonard Elisenu.

The Philippines was among the 43 Asian and 54 African countries that competed in the Games, which closed Saturday at the GMC Balayogi Stadium here.

Jesser Harry Talisayon captured the gold in the Eighth division Friday to lift the Philippines to 15th overall in the medal tally dominated by China and India. The Filipino also accounted for four silvers and 13 bronzes.

Realtors stop late Beermen counterattack

Bonnaga 44

Kenneth Duremdes rediscovered his fiery form and playmaker Jason Webb also sparkled as the Realtors sent the Beermen to their eighth setback in 13 games.

Duremdes paced the Realtors with 28 points, something the 1996 league MVP failed to do since recuperating from a calf injury at the start of the season-ending conference.

Duremdes chumped seven straight points during a 26-9 Stu. Cunta blast, bridging the third and fourth periods, including two daarbies that gave the Realtors a 73-71 lead, after trailing by as many as 11 points.

Webb spread his from the perimeter, sinking 10 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter to contain the Realtors' fiery winding.

Marlon Aquino also shared the spotlight, adding 10 points and 13 rebounds to backstop Damian Owens, who had 18 markers and seven rebounds.

The Beermens savvayed headed for a cruise as Brian Johnson took over the scoring duties in the third quarter.

With Johnson smacking the hoop and scoring 9 of his 26 in that span, the Beermens raced to a 71-60 spread only to be caught flat-footed by the Realtors in the end.

Showing their readiness to pull the rug from under their rivals in the endgame, the Beermens cut the Realtors' nine-point margin, with a rash of three-pointers in the final two minutes.

Oliver Rasela buried two three-point

OLSEN Acosta of San Miguel Beer gets entangled with Eto. Lorin's Jason Webb as Marlon Aquino looks on during their game last night. ALVIN KASIBA

Mixed results for young RP chessers

HALKIDIKI, Greece—The Philippines continued its rather counter campaigns in the 2021 World Youth Chess Championships, winning some and losing some in the all-important ninth and 10th rounds as the tubos Polaco and Pelino Acosta here.

Led by Kiel Mister Orbon and Cindy Angelo, the Filipinos posted six wins, 10 draws and four losses in five different age categories in this tough, 11-round tournament which attracted more than 1,000 participants from a record 64 countries.

Orbon, the third of seven children of a construction engineer from Calamba, Batangas, displayed another high level brand of chess and claimed the biggest of the Filipinos' five 9-straight in the penultimate round by beating 10th seed Sebastian Feller (2310, 2187) of France in 40 moves of the Nyo-Austrian Attack.

Orbon, who fell on his 17 Boris Kharbedia (RUS 2242) of Ukraine in the previous round, deviated from the book to gain a strong positional advantage with the white pieces.

The win—the fifth against three draws and two losses—enabled Orbon to stay in the upper half of the standings, in a tie for 13th to 22nd places with 6.5 points in the boys U-20 and under class, going into the 11th and final round on Sunday.

"Maganda yung panalo ni Kiel sa laban. Talagang nagaling," said GM Eugene Torre, who is acting head coach of the 11 players team being supported by the Pilar Sportsmen Foundation and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Angelo drew with Tenjin Ratnaya of Mongolia in the ninth round and won over Mathilde Congia of France in the penultimate round to improve her record to 5.5 points in the girls' 14-year-old and-under category.

Equally impressive were Oliver Barbosa, who defeated Gabriel Sanchez of Argentina in the ninth round and drew with Matthew Cossette of France in the 10th round in the boys' 18-and-under class and Julian Joseph de Kuizon, who halved the point with Jorian Veed of MDA.

Allen out for 8 weeks

SEATTLE—Seattle Superbowler guard Ray Allen will be out six to eight weeks after successful arthroscopic surgery Saturday on his right ankle.

The surgery, the first of the 28-year-old Allen's career, was performed by St. Richard Pedad in Los Angeles.

A team source whose didn't specify whether chemo removed a bone chip, damaged ligaments or other debris. Allen told reporters before the procedure that doctors didn't know exactly what was lodged inside his ankle.

Allen went on the injured list Oct. 27 and didn't travel with the team for its season-opening series in Japan against the LA Clippers. He is expected to attend Seattle's home opener against Portland on Nov. 7.

Allen averaged 24.5 points in 29 games for the Sonics last season after being acquired in a Steelheaded trade that sent Gary Payton, the franchise's all-time leading scorer, to Milwaukee. AP

Yakult 10-Miler listing ends tomorrow

RUNNERS have only until tomorrow to submit their entries for this Sunday's Yakult 10-Miler which will start and finish at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Complex grounds in Pasay City.

Now on its 15th year, the annual race offers P180,000 in prizes to top finishers of the centerpiece 16-mile event, the 10-kilometer race and the 5K Fun run.

Entries can be submitted at the Yakapon Mind Spa Plaza Bldg. on Roxas Blvd. corner Taft Ave. in Pasay.

All finishers will receive certificates and Yakult running singlets. A special category will be awarded to the group with the most number of entries.

In celebration of Yakult Philz' 20th anniversary, cash prizes of P7,000 plus a medal will be awarded to the winners of the men's and women's categories of the 16-mile event. Runners-up will get P5,000, with the third to fifth placers pocketing P2,000, P1,000 and P500, respectively. The top two overall finishers in the 10-mile race, male and female, and the top finisher of the 5K fun run will also win Oliver shoes.

One race day Nike Running Industrial Sports Medicine Consultants will offer runners foot type evaluations for free. They survey the latest Nike running shoes designed for these specific foot types.

Last year, almost 2,500 runners joined the race, with Eduardo Buenaventa ruling the men's event in 49:37 and Christabel Marisa topping the female side in 1:00:07. The 5K run was won by Sherel Castillo in 15:56 and Jean Bunga in 19:11.

Assisting organizers in this Sunday's race are the cities of Manila, Pasay and Pasadena, their respective traffic bureaus, MMDA, Philippine National Red Cross and Sportcom Communications.

The PBA is not terminally ill

BARE EYE

Rucah Trinidad

80 now, he's more than aware of the illness.

He also knows what's the final.

But there's one big problem.

PBA Commissioner Willie Marcial obviously is not fully acquainted with the latter disease.

We need actually to see the metascope.

One look and you could sense the need for an urgent cure.

Of course, there was no need yet for an ambulance; as people, our mentality is supersonic basketball fans, could join hands to save the PBA.

Problem here is that these people themselves have started to avoid the pro league.

Yes, the PBA is no longer as hot, as well admired and feverishly patronized as it used to be.

The old loving feeling is gone, gone, gone.

***

It being his job, Commissioner Hain-of-breed value had looked like an instant cure.

But you know what? One look at the prescription gave majority of member PBA teams the shock.

The proposal: sent these responsible team officials into a nervous, frantic shudder.

They never Hain's proposed cure, although it looked sincere and harmless on the surface, could amount to suicide.

No, it was not the cobra venom Hain had recommended for the PBA with his offer to alter the annual calendar and come up with only one championship, a la NBA, starting next year.

But that, instead of Hain two team managers we had talked to, could amount to merry killing.

It's true, the PBA is sick, but it's not so seriously ill.

***

Honestly, one reporter here, just like Mr. Eala, had initially thought that a one-championship format could help restore the PBA to its glory years.

You know, those days when people would come running to the game venue just to cheer for their respective teams, not unlike radical zealots ready to die for both belief and devotion.

Anyway, Eala had explained that, with the one-conference format, they could also assure the PBA schedule to the international basketball calendar.

And that this adjustment would give the PBA room to adjust its finest to be fielded in prestigious Asian tournaments, like the Asian Games and the ABC, which also serves as Olympic qualifier for the region.

But PBA decision makers could not look for to agree that pitching local pros, including those who are former national squad for the hotel, had reportedly ended up in disaster.

What the PBA can do is help install a farm team of young national players whose skills and talent would be attuned to coaching international standards.

***

In repair, the Eala cure had appeared great at first hand.

Without any one dumpster room such year, the PBA would only assemble the Asiatic one-tickt which it has been blindly copying since 1975, in first year of existence.

But, going by the vote of the hosts, the two-conference format could be great only to the few that could qualify and outside engagement.

What should not also be overlooked is the fact that the continuous of all players are based strictly on the three-conference rents and incentive systems.

Another factor in the Eala format that will certainly alienate fans from the PBA is the scheduling and bracketing of squads.

This reporter, after a close look at the proposed new PBA annual schedule, was readily turned off.

Why? Well, with its dizzying intricacies and shifts, media could use up all available date and space to just explain the format to the public.

There was one phase, reserved for noncontenders who would be allowed to compete themselves in the lower bracket, that's sure to baffle and frustrate even the most avid crossword puzzle addict.

***

Team officials opposed to the Eala proposal could indeed be accused of selfishness.

But, in all honesty, the biggest victim of this format is the very essence of PBA existence.

What the PBA should instead formulate is a system that would lead and inspire all the players to come up with sustained dedication to their calling.

This is being mentioned here because, if half of the players get tweaked in the one-conference format, the final result would be doubly disastrous.

By the time players from the semi-cowful clubs reappear a year after disqualification, they would have all been forgotten by the baseball fans.

The idea is to bring the PBA back close to the people.

***

Give the league back to the fans, as our team managers begged.

To show their concern, several team officials offered to meet Eala midway.

That said, they are agreeable to a two-conference format; although this has yet to be taken up with owners who spend a fortune for teams with the hope of gaining necessary advertising income.

Unlike in the NBA, the gold that sustains the PBA is product marketing.

Let's be practical, and these team officials, we cannot afford to kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

Otherwise, two team officials could end to the heaviest that they would have no choice but desert the PBA.

The point here, for what it needs is a cure, not the coroner.

TOBY'S BADMINTON

Malabon boy, DLS-Z bet shine

RUSSEL Hernandez and Abigail Garcia seized the 13-and-under singles crowns yesterday for the Toby's Age Group Badminton Championships at the Old Megaworld Activity Center.

Hernandez, a grade 5 student at the Virgen Elementary School in Malabon and who has trained for two years under national coach Paulo Orosa, posted a convincing 15-4, 15-12 victory over Ivan Angelo of FICBC.

Hernandez later combined with Edrick Lorenzo of St. Thomas of the Child Jesus to capture the doubles title over Johan Lee of Xavier and John Cielo Urpiano of Hagdan Bato Elementary School, 15-11, 15-6.

The 13-year-old Garcia, a fourth grader at De La Salle-Zobel, trimped her date-rival Jaebiko Rosero, 11-3, 11-8, to win the girls' crown. Garcia won the singles silver medal in the PRISAA and champion of the team three-wins the bronze medal in the Mini-Championships last year.

The girls' doubles title went to Aviella de Jesus and Angela Angeles of St. James Junior Academy. They whipped the partnership of Ysabel Denise Garcia and Annabelle Lacsone of Sports Zone, 15-2, 15-1.

SC Chan of ZPDA and Kanan defeated Ralph Lao of GGBC and Anabelle Lacsete of Sports Zone, 15-9, 15-6, to capture the mixed doubles title in the wedding event spon-

sored by adidas, Cultivar, Pilipino, REL, Pilmico, Gosoy, IGC, SM Hypermart, 105.5 Hot, Tarahan and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

In the boys' 16-and-under singles, Jovian Ang downed Jerai Geremiah, 15-11, 15-2, to advance to the semifinals against Stanley Macapaz, a 15-7, 15-7 winner over Johan Co.

In another matchup, Gabriel Villanueva beat Kristler Hernaiz, 15-12, 15-8, and Jose Mobilego conquered Devin Dalisay, 15-3, 13-12, to also earn berths in the last four.

In the boys' 12-under singles, Enzo Guerrero surprised Jovian Joshua Garcia, 15-4, 15-7, to advance to the finals against Patricio Magsaysay, who upended John Gregg Bie, 15-6, 15-5.

QUIRIMIT prompts in along Kennon Road on last year's Tour Filipinas.

Quirimit heads roster of favorites

REIGNING Tour Filipinas champion Ansel Quirimit heads the cast of big guns among 300 riders vying in the Tour's Metro Manila special race this Sunday.

The unprecedented 114-km mound race, which will be lined off and facilitated at the Marikina City Sports Park, will pass through much of the metropolis' most congested areas as part of the Tour's schedule of special races.

Organizers have laid out a challenging route that will take the riders to UP Solana, Marcelo Green subdivision, Commonwealth, Mindanao Avenue in Caloocan City, Grand Avenue, Bonanza, Santo Rosario, Antonio, Ocean Boulevard, till Pasay, Macapagal Avenue, Roxas Road, Ayala and Alabang, where they will turn toward Manila.

Riders from the last Tour's 12 team will compete in the event primarily sponsored by Ariel's and backed by Pirelli tire, DSB Bank and Mizo.

Quirimit of the Tambuan Rizza Riders is expected to be challenged for race honors and the top cash prize by his fellow national teammates who are in the thick of preparation for next month's 22nd Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam.

Jayvee Navarro of Air21, the rather loose outing seller are Jalid, Jaycong, Ingco Sports, Bowling Gold, PEOTRON, Gilley's Mind Pearls, DILO, Petrol 117, DILO, Drug Busters, DEBE Trousers, DOTC Redmen and BIR Yel Bikers.

Rodolfo Mario Ma. Joaquin Fernando del Rio the starting gun at 9 a.m.

The Tour's qualifying races are the 200-km crossed start race on an out-and-back course in Carmen, Batangas on Nov. 11 and the 40-km individual time trial from Lemery to Batulao in Batangas on Nov. 13 and the 90-km individual time trial from Lemery to Batulao in Batangas on Nov. 13

Henman shocks Roddick in Paris

RODDICK curses his face after losing a point. AP

Unseeded Romanian sets up final showdown with Tim

PARIS—Tim Henman of Britain stunned Andy Roddick in the Paris Masters semifinals Saturday, upsetting the American, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (7), and ending his bid for a seventh title this season.

"He came up with the goods—so, well done," Roddick said. "He just outplayed me."

Henman, unstressed his earlier match-saved to leapfrog to 11 this year against Roddick, the US Open champion who already was assured of moving up to No. 1 in the ATP Tour rankings next week.

At the 2:1-one-fifth game set-second, he cursed and slammed his racket to the ground and on one point, whacked his head with it a few times in punishment for sending a service return to the net.

"It was a great match for me, and hopefully a great month for the spectators," Henman said. "It's extremely satisfying."

Henman said he was unable to sleep over his last round included a win over No. 8 seed Ramon Schneider in the quarters and Dinu Pescariu, who toppled top-seed Juan Carlos Ferrero.

His forecast for the final: "If I play aggressive, the today, I have a big chance."

Henman's victory cost Roddick also came on top of a stellar run in Paris. His fellow, who has never won a Masters Series title, eliminated Wimbledon champion and third-seeded Roger Federer, No. 7 Sebastien Grosjean, and three-time French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten in earlier rounds. Henman says he's never played better.

"It's certainly the best that I've played," Henman said. "It's always been there. You know, I've played well in patches, but not so consistently."

Henman's strategy against the strongest server in the game was clear: Tim Roddick rugged. He brought the attention up, not over him back, dove side to side. The tactic rushed up repeated points.

Henman, who's been working to improve his serve, left Roddick stunned at the baseline on several occasions. The 29-year-old clocked seven Friday's aces to Roddick's opening service and four held in the new game with an aggressive display of the serve-and-volley skills he excels at.

"The first game was by an opportunity," Henman said. "It set the tone for the match. It sent a message to Andy." AP

HENMAN acknowledges the cheering crowd. AP

BELL CHALLENGE

Venezuelan netter stuns Pierce

QUEBEC CITY, Canada—Unseeded Milagros Sequera swam, and her improbable run at the $170,000 Bell Challenge in Saturday, matches her first career WTA Tour final with a rout of top-seeded Mary Pierce of France.

Sequera, a Venezuelan who has spent most of the year on the lower ITF Tour, silenced the partisan crowd by embarrassing the Montreal-born Pierce, 6-4, 6-0.

Having rallied to win two straight matches after dropping the first set, Sequera made quick work of Pierce, a former Grand Slam champion denied a chance at her 11th career title and first since the 2000 French Open.

Sequera, 23, has won eight titles on the ITF circuit but none this year.

She has now won four straight matches and on Sunday she'll try to knock off her third-seeded victim in this tournament in No. 2 Mauresmo of Russia, who is gunning for her second title.

Shaughnessy had a tougher time but also to the tallest by a 6-1, 6-2, 6-1 victory over fourth-seeded American Laura Granville. Granville was denied her first career final appearance.

Playing her first full season on the WTA Tour, the 18-year-old Shaughnessy has climbed to 32nd in the world rankings.

Shaughnessy is playing the best tennis of her short pro career as she advanced in her chief straight semifinal here.

She won her first WTA Tour title in both singles and doubles at the Japan Open four weeks ago.

There, last week in Luxembourg, she knocked the second-seeded Granville, falling to eventual champion Kim Clijsters and jumped to a career-high No. 32 ranking.

She made her Grand Slam debut this year by qualifying for the Australian Open.

Many of the top WTA players are not participating in Quebec, preferring to rest for next week's WTA Tour championships.

Singles semifinals results: Maria Shaughnessy (11), Russia, def. Laura Granville (4), United States, 1-6, 6-2, 6-3; Milagros Sequera, Venezuela, def. Mary Pierce (1), France, 6-4, 6-0.

Doubles semifinals results: Li Ting and Sun Tian Tian (4), China, def. Eva Dyrberg (3), China, 7-6 (7), 6-2; Ilia Kulikova, Russia, and Meilen Tu (1), United States, def. Nuza Mkupi, Japan, and Samantha Reeves (3), United States, 6-3, 6-3. AFP

PIERCE

SEQUERA celebrates a shot to Pierce.

Cohen tops Skate Canada anew

EDMUNDSTON, Ontario—Emily Cohen didn't need a jump combination, yet she was good enough to win her second straight women's singles title at Skate Canada.

The 18-year-old American, coming off a victory at Skate America, is playing under the new rules system being used for the Grand Prix events. Points are awarded for every facet of a skater's presentation. Cohen got 120.46 for her free skate Saturday for a total score of 197.60.

In her fourth Grand Prix event.

"This system is going to help me get the most out of my skating and help me be a better skater overall," she said.

In the men's competition, world champion Evgeni Plushenko of Russia, for basically the first time in his four years of the Grand Prix season, earned 211.40 points for his free skate, and won the event with a 233.55 total.

AP

Mauresmo vs Myskina for crown

VILLANOVA, Pennsylvania—Second-seeded Amelie Mauresmo of France survived 5-1 deficits in the second set and second-set tiebreaker to beat No. 8 Anastasia Myskina of Russia and advance to the Advanta Championships final.

"I kept fighting, but it was tough to still be there to victory," Mauresmo said after a 2-6, 7-6 (6), 7-5 victory Saturday that took 2 hours, 35 minutes.

On Sunday, Mauresmo will play third-seeded Anastasia Myskina of Russia, who beat No. 7 Nadia Petrova, also Russian, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 in the other semifinal.

The hard-hitting Sophisma appeared headed toward a quick and easy two-set win, taking her opening service game and breaking Mauresmo's serve in the 9th game to take a 5-1 lead in the second.

Then Mauresmo, with her right thigh taped, began to rally.

Relying on her long forehand, she won four of eight games. Sophisma kept approaching the net, but Mauresmo stayed low and smacked passing shots for easy points. Perhaps the comeback took something out of her, because Sophisma went ahead, 5-1, in the tiebreaker.

Sophisma, ranked 11th, then served for the match ahead, 6-5. But Mauresmo came back and won on her next five points to take the set.

"It's a big comeback. It was one of the best," Mauresmo said.

Mauresmo, who missed four months of the season with right knee cartilage inflammation, struggled with her serve all night. She got her first serve in only 50th percent of the time, though she had five aces to Sophisma's one. Mauresmo's other top serve marked 109 mph (175 kph)—was still in the low 100s by the third set, but she double-fouled 10 times. AP

ROSSI: Patience wins

Rossi zips to new qualifying lap mark

VALENCIA, Spain—Defending champion Valentino Rossi of Italy streaked to a new qualifying lap record Saturday, taking his ninth pole position of the year in the final of two qualifying sessions ahead of Sunday's GP MotoGP.

Rossi set a record time of 1:32.478 on his red, but lap at 12mm into set on the 2.4-mile Ricardo Tormo Circuit.

"The last lap was very, very good," he said after the end. "I went 300 pro-ven. It is a fantastic time. We are ready for the race tomorrow."

Rossi's record time beat that Rogelio Arroyo from Kent last year by 0.733 seconds.

Arroyo's two Hiltonian also beat last year's pole time, coming in second at 1:33.148.

When Rossi starts the 30th and final round on Sunday, it may be the last time he rides for Honda. Strongly rumored to be heading to Yamaha for 2005, despite three dominating championship seasons with Honda, Rossi has promised a statement about his 2006 plans after Sunday's race.

Hiltonian will start next to Rossi on the front row Sunday.

Nine 1 will be filled out by Italy's Loris Capirossi, who finished at 1:32.275, and MotoGP rookie Nicky Hayden from the United States, whose time was 1:33.346.

Hayden's performance makes him the first American rider to start on the front row since the middle of the 2002 season.

"This just making it one day at a time," said Hayden. "But it is the last race of the year. There's no reason to hold back. It's time to go for it."

Straight-shooting Texas rider Colin Edwards, twice a Superbike champion, came in seventh, equaling his best qualifying performance of the year.

In the 250cc class, Ricardo De Pastor of France will take the top of the grid Sunday. His time of 2:30.499 was the fastest Saturday through a left 0.704 seconds behind the 2002 pole position lap record set by Marco Melandri.

"Pole position is good," said De Pastor. "But what we want is more important."

Toni Elias of Spain, who clocked 2:30.595, will start in second position.

The 250cc championship leader, Manuel Poggiali, will start on the outside of row one, having come in at 2:30.735. AP

BUSINESS

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Gov't raises tariffs on finished products

By Michelle V. Rorra

MALACAÑANG issued recently an executive order raising the tariff rates on 464 product lines to provide local industries exposure from tough competition posed by cheap imports.

Executive Order No. 241, signed in early October, covers finished products, the importation of which at lower tariffs posed unfair competition to their locally made counterparts.

The order increased from 26 percent to 35 percent the tariffs on 146 items (including footwear) from 15 to 20 percent that tariffs on 26 items (footballing clothing and shoes), and from a range of 5-7 percent to 10 percent the rates on 184 products.

The tariff increases on finished products represent the first phase of the ongoing tariff review being conducted by the inter-agency Committee on Tariff and Related Matters, where the Department of Trade and Industry, the National Economic Development Authority and other government agencies are members.

With the tariff review on finished products now completed, Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the CTRP would immediately begin the review of the tariffs imposed on imported raw materials.

Roxas said the tariffs imposed on important finished products that directly compete with local products were given priority in the review to help local industries to recover from the ill effects of the free trade environment.

The review covers 389% listed favored national tariff rates imposed on 1,292 product lines (out of the existing 5,000 tariff lines).

The increased rates on the said finished products will be imposed starting this year to 2005 when some are scheduled to be implemented.

Among the 1,292 tariff lines covered by the review, 828 will be maintained.

"In all of these adjustments, we balanced the interest of the manufacturers as well as that of the consumers, being mindful that increases in tariffs translate to increases in prices," said Roxas in a briefing with reporters.

He noted that the ongoing tariff review was the first ever conducted by the government to cover a significant number of 389% tariff lines.

Roxas said the Tariff Commission, which is a member of the CTRP, had estimated that the planned tariff adjustments will generate additional tariff revenue of P1.2 billion yearly.

The move to review the country's 389% tariff rates was an offshoot of the call from various local industries for protection in view of the stiff competition they had to face following the government's move to significantly reduce tariff rates.

The Federation of Philippine Industries blamed the government for setting the country's tariff rates to levels much lower than what were required by the World Trade Organization and than those imposed by other countries.

Mindanao assured of enough power

By Christine A. Gaylican

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—National Power Corp. has assured the Mindanao business community that the government has concrete plans aimed at averting a looming power shortage in Mindanao next year.

Napocor senior vice president Pio Barcelo said at the Mindanao Business Conference that the Cabinet through the Unified Power Task Force led by the Department of Energy had identified power generation and transmission projects that would increase the power supply to be inked.

The Mindanao business community is concerned that there is not enough power to supply the region's growing electricity demand. Napocor earlier estimated that by early 2004, there would not be enough power reserves that could be tapped for the entire region.

"The Unified Power Task Force has pre-selected the power generation and transmission projects that should be installed beginning next year and address the power requirements of the booming Mindanao economy," Barcelo said.

The other members of the Unified Power Task Force are Napocor, National Transmission Corp., the National Electrification Administration and Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corp.

However, the Napocor official noted that these power projects might require not less than P13 billion to P20 billion in new investments.

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Trade and tested

ACTUALLY the poor got spoke on condition that reporters should not step too much on his feet. They also promised to show voice recorders into his mouth only a few at a time.

He was more other than the kind-and-soul Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II. He met recently with US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone.

In the meeting, Roxas reportedly told Ricciardone that this country would keep its mind in the WTO against things like farm subsidies to rich countries.

Now their meeting took place after the 15-year child of Farooq Brahmin in Manila. This was not intended as an endorsement of Ghent-ed by The IT for 2004 Huawei.

At the meeting and of our friends, sole, "round" which we took to the WTO together with other poor countries, were the world's richest countries like the United States.

Still, Roxas insisted that Ricciardone did not country say 'D' government, or, "request" (which is different from "demand") for us to change our anti-US position.

And so we will defy the US, according to Roxas, despite that country's crawling dominance in force, effect, audit, alt, "request" us not to change our mind. Is that it?

It's just that, as Roxas put it, Revolutionary only asked if our position were the same as before. For a moment, I thought for Roxas, and for Ricciardone, was the diplomat.

***

SEPTEMBER, but later in meeting this rate admirations as to trade policy cause everybody is already having those all their tax but and but-but.

***

Some cons say that the tariff issue can or else make or break Glorietta in 2004. It is one way for her to show a little decisiveness. Do something, Jean, before it's too late!

Under Executive Order 334, with which Glorietta is nevertheless final nothing to do, so it was issued by the previous administration, but now is facing more punishment.

It requires more tariff cuts. For certain goods, tariffs will be down to zero by January 2004. That's only two months away. So you know when to find your next job!

***

FOR it does not matter to the half a million people who lost their jobs, and to those who are about to lose theirs, that economists had nothing to do with the stupid tariff cut policy.

What's important to them is that the is now in a position to do something about the problem of ever increasing number of jobless due to imports cheaper down.

Only three years ago in 2000, based on official figures, some 2,200 firms closed down. The next year the number went up by 27 percent, or about 2,800 companies.

Last year, the figure went up to about 3,300 companies. It is going up faster and faster, according, and you can imagine how many more will close down.

***

2003 look around. It is not difficult to find be

THE EDITOR

BREAKTIME

Comrade R. Bartal III

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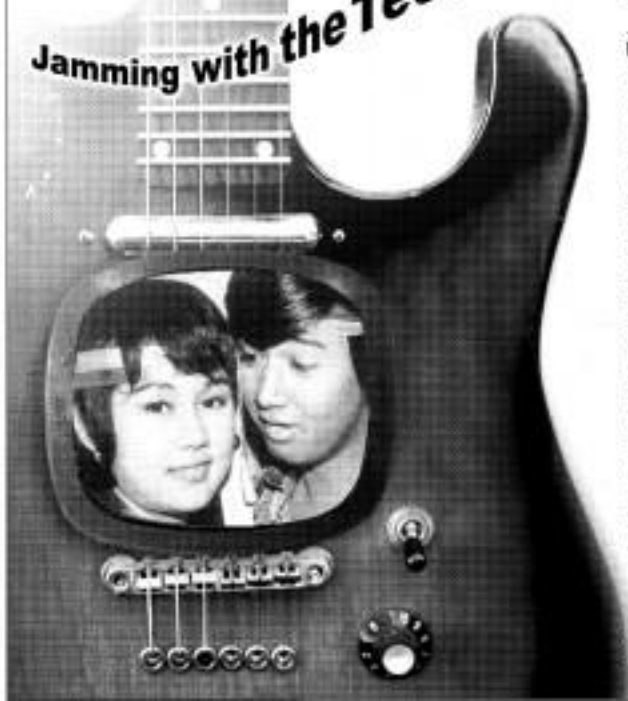

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It was in 1961 when ABS-CBN tested the waters in capturing the youth audience with Jam Session, the very first teen program in Philippine television hosted by Bobby Ilig. Inspired by the prospect of attracting young viewers, ABS-CBN put up Nine Teasers in 1966, this time with Jose Mari Chan and Roman Asencio as hosts.

The youth-oriented show genre soared to new heights in 1979 when ABS-CBN programming executives decided to bank on the talents of versatile young actress Vilma Santos and Taiwan ng Tanghalan champion Edgar Mortiz. This move gave birth to the formidable love team of V and Ed which was launched on Edgar loves Vilma, a sitcom targeting the youth. And with this landed a capability to draw in young viewers, they were again paired off in the widely popular Sunday variety show S' Sensations with Perla Adea, Ronny Mamar, Sonny Cortez, the Lozada and Angge.

Discovering young and bright talents has always been a tradition at ABS-CBN, an undertaking more which gave the network its source of professional and loyal stars through the years.

In 1991, the tradition was made into an institution as it introduced the first ever network-based talent scout in the broadcasting industry with the Talent Development and Management Center (TDMC). And with the youth-oriented afternoon show "Ang TV" promdal stars were picked out among a group of young talents.

Today, the network's top-caliber artists like PATRICK Garcia, Claudine Barretto and Piolo Pascual, all products of the star-making system, ABS-CBN Talent Center under TDMC have not just received commendations from various award-giving bodies but have also won the hearts of Filipinos.

Young blood energizes and invigorates Pinoy TV. With this realization, ABS-CBN never stops looking for innovative ways of staying true to its tradition of putting together the newest and most promising crowd of young stars for the Filipino people to enjoy.

50 ABS-CBN TELEVISION SINCE 1953

In The Service Of The Filipino

SEC cracks whip on club

FED up with the continued defiance of their orders, chief Lito Bautista said the SEC en banc here ordered JMC personnel to deny executives get copies of the stockholders' list, stock and transfer book, and proxy documents from the Baguio Country Club.

The Dec. 28 order directed Annie Tesoro, chief of SEC Baguio, to present to the JCC office in Baguio while another team was directed to go to the JCC Manila office in Ramon Magsaysay building on Roxas Blvd. and get photocopies of the documents.

The club is scheduled to hold a stockholders' meeting on Thursday under SEC supervision but the JCC board, led by Atty. Rodolfo Albano Ishani and Cesilio Sol Claim scanteur Solomon Aguasili (pres-dent), has executed Resolu n and the SEC to prevent the club from, among other things, distributing the membership records to other members.

The latest SEC directive comes amid findings that five of the biggest corporate shareholders of the club, owning a total of 408 shares, are sm ress organized with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The SEC also wants to examine the JCC stock and transfer book to find out why the number of shareholders has ballooned to 2,314 from the last report of 1,282 shareh ld in 1997.

Among those admitted as members of the exclusive club during those intervening years were Jinggoy Estrada, Eriap Ergina pal Julito Diokno, and Eriap Enrile, retired Chief Justice Andres Narvasa.

In view of Thursday's shareholders' meeting, the JCC board, as well as Cipa Fontdole Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco and Pastor Bayani, has been actively soliciting proxies from the members in pursuit of their plan to convert the corporation into a non-stock, non-profit company.

Other than shielding the JCC from corporate taxation, the conversion into a non-stock corporation would also prevent previous shareholders from transferring their shares to their children lest since membership would no longer be transmissible pursuit to after the planned conversion.

Pending the conversion, the JCC has already given support holding annual stockholders' meeting and even extended the term of its board members to two years, contrary to the one year provision mandated by the Corporation Code of the Philippines and regular rules of the SEC.

In the last stockholders' meeting held in 2001, JCC vice president for legal affairs Lorna Kapunan and corporate secretary Victor Lo Ito Reyes ruled out any individual voting, despite protests from those in hand members who amassed all the way to Baguio, and simply cast the management proxies in behalf of the current board.

As a result of the JCC corporate treasury maneuvers, over he ther Philippine Stock Exchange chair Vivian Techangco, who was running for director, got nine votes despite her having collected about 500 proxies.

Adventure in Avenida

OOKs Chito Madrigal should be enjoying her 60ties now that she is in her golden years. Instead, the matriarch is seen usually seen as the unsung director of Bus. Cen ter Manila supervising the construction of her new building on Avenida Rizal.

Called Shoppers' Gold Inc., the 3 ½-floor building is being rushed to ease for the renovations of what used to be Manila's leading MSC. A joint venture with the family of investment banker Benjamin Rimando, the new Madrigal building is being built on the ruins of the old Anaca theater and will be linked with the Gateway section of the LRT.

Despite construction still laying miles of wires, all 500 shops within the open-door mall have already been leased be the mid-dand 10 years at P260,000 for every square meter.

As a result of Mayor Lito Atienza's redevelopment vision, where the stretch of Avenida from Escolta to C.M. Recto has been erased off as redevelop ment traffic, building owners along the redeemed block have been spurred to spruce up their respective pieces of property.

It also helps that City Hall has given the property owners a free pass via Mendiola, the flip side of the office to this habitat so lodgings would mean being slapped right away with hefty higher real estate taxes.

Because of the incentive, Art Deco structures that line up the cultural-ful district like the Aquarium building and Ilaw theaters are being given a new lease on life.

According to the properties, the market plan of the area merchants, given that the LRT lines will intersect the Avenida and C.M. Recto crossroad, is to wean away shoppers from going to near-deed Divisoria by offering Divisoria goodies at Divisoria prices.

To relieve the parking shortage, Madrigal is also planning to convert another property near Plaza Del Carmen into a carpark.

Heard through the grapevine

THE CONFIRMATION of Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita is being held up at the Commission on Appointments by the lone opposition of UP Professor Froilan Allian who is mounting the Gabriela marchers' line that the military has been sponsoring terrorist bombings in Mindanao.

Ermita claims that the bombings are the handiwork of the Abu Sayyaf and the Jemaah Islamiyah.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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RENTAL BROKERS WELCOME

SMC protests BIR ruling

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SAN Miguel Corp. has joined under protest the Bureau of Internal Revenue's ruling that it was liable for P13 billion in tax deficiency for passing off to San Mig Light flavor as a new brand rather than a variant of its best-selling Pale Pilsen Beer.

San Miguel has maintained that San Mig Light was a new brand with a distinct packaging compared to the Pale Pilsen flavor. San Miguel also insisted that it should continue paying the old tax rate of P15.25 per liter for a new brand rather than the P19.91 liter tax rate assessed on variants.

But a BIR official, who requested anonymity, said Jun Miguel's protest should not stop the agency from collecting on the tax deficiency and the new tax rates.

Based on annual procedures, the BIR official said a delinquent tax payer had to pay the new tax assessment or its succeeding sales even when it had filed a protest on the new tax ruling.

Data culled from the BIR showed that the government would be forgoing over P60 million a month if San Miguel was allowed to pay the "new brand" tax rate on San Mig Light instead of the variant rate.

Since San Mig Light was launched in December 1999, San Miguel has sold nearly 300 million liters as of August this year when the BIR ruled that the product was erroneously classified as a new brand rather than a variant.

In a memorandum, Revenue Deputy Commissioner Jose Mario C. Buising said that San Mig was clearly a take off on the name of San Miguel Pale Pilsen and that both have the same lettering and logo. Buising noted that San Mig Light had been marketed as its label as a "low calorie pale pilsen" and had been marketed as having "the same full flavored taste with less alcohol content."

The BIR estimated that San Miguel was liable for P1.306 billion in tax deficiency during the period but it could have a higher amount to include the penalties that the agency could slap against the beer giant.

The National Internal Revenue Code of 1997 states that any corporation liable for any acts or omission in violation of the tax law shall be fined double the amount of deficiency taxes, surcharges and interest. Manufacturers that misdeclare or misrepresent in its source statement any payment data or information would also be penalized by a summary cancellation or withdrawal of its permit to engage in the production and sale of alcohol products.

Trade and tested

From page B1

period here. They are in all the legitimate stores and the illegitimate sidewalk shops. Gosh, even in the stolen goods section!

Over and/or recently, I asked the country's most favorite merchandiser, SM Department Store's Tessie Sy Coson, why her stores now carry a lot of imported items.

Only a few years ago, I would go crazy with frustration when I went to any SM department store. I could find only locally-made products there. They never had my size.

Hal associate Bonie said she was forced to carry a lot of imported items, simply because she could not find enough local suppliers. A lot of them already went bankrupt.

***

ALSO drowned in the flood of imported goods were the consumer electronics factories of the Sobrepeña Group, which used to make the Sony brand of goods here.

Since 1962, or for 40 years, Sobi worked hard to develop the local market for Sony. It was the only appreciative consumer electronics company owned by Filipinos.

Thanks to its success, Sobi was rewarded with the closure of its factories here. Not only that, it was forced to move to manufacturing business in China.

To top it all, Sony never put up its own factory here, which it promised the Philippine government it would do, for Sony, if it simply changes to import everything.

***

BETTE many others now to the same situation as Sobi's, business think-tanks are saying that we are on the brink of an economic collapse.

The tariff cuts triggered a domino effect which, even before all the chips could fall down, already turned into a vicious cycle.

The cuts forced factories to closed down. This resulted in a lot of jobless. More people would not earn the money to buy other locally made goods.

Then, more factories closed down, which meant less taxes to the government, which could not invest in infrastructure, which also ultimately also had for business.

***

UNFORTUNATELY, such a gloomy scenario is the outside of businessmen cannot just disappear, even with the good enough growth in the agriculture sector.

The only way to solve the problem of massive unemployment, and thus also the problem of ever-increasing budget deficit, is still industrialization.

Agribusiness is fine, since we need food, food/food, on the table, but it also has its limitations. Our farm land area can never increase.

Only industries can hire all the workers we have. But they need huge capital, and thus they also need government support. And they only get it in other countries. Not here.

***

ODD favorite fighter in the PCSO, a certain Rubén Carranza, who never shied away from using the tremendous power of the PCSO over unquestioned bias, struck again.

Even what I gathered, it was Carranza who ordered a stop to IBC-13's airing of PBA games right away last Wednesday without much ado. Such power!

Assuming he had as much experience in running a multi-billion-peso network station as a scout, Carranza did not exactly have a right mind for the consolidated PBA games.

Nobody else was affected by his action except only the PBA itself, plus all the advertisers of IBC-13, who all were angered by the sudden unannounced cancellation.

***

ALBEIT, the PCSO was never known for meeting until the businesses it took over. Under the PCSO, for instance, a cattle farm in Laguna lost all its top-class breeders.

With one single bright move, anyway, Carranza only threw away the goodwill which IBC-13 tried to build over the years among the country's top advertisers.

The IBC-13 made the decision not to air the PBA games in its meeting last Wednesday. The decision was implemented on that same night.

With my little experience as a television executive at one time in my life, I never knew that anybody could ever do that.

In the television racket, you always prepare a replacement where you swap a show. If not, you only kill the entire station, after all.

***

BUT a little source telling it was a cut told me that Carranza simply imposed his will upon the IBC-13 board in the Wednesday meeting.

You see, Chronicle says it ill to put this media guy Carranza in the board, at the same time that he sits a PCSO highest commissioner.

In that Wednesday meeting, he made a decision for the entire board, not as board member, but as a PCSO commissioner. He forced the decision on the other directors.

And that is the reason the trader board resigned. Nobody can blame them. That single decision was the death sentence for IBC-13. Who wants to deal with it now?

***

IT seems that Carranza had enough of the PBA games, and his dissatisfaction stems over terms of a group called Summit.

Summit is a blockimer of IBC-13 like the companies Viva and Solar. Summit is part of the consortium which got the PBA television contract.

That, it was Summit which should pay IBC-13 for airing the PBA games. Unfortunately, Summit failed to do so, thereby meriting Carranza's famous decision.

Other blockimers of IBC-13 also owed the station a lot of money. Viva owed it something like hundreds of millions of pesos. Perhaps Carranza forgot to do anything about it.

***

All for the PBA contract, nevertheless, according to my little ear, Carranza and another board member, a certain Philip Juico, were actually up against Jimmy Ang.

He is the erstwhile personal publicist of Gotesco's, and the PBA coverage of IBC-13 was lucrative, which Carranza and Juico wanted to shoot down from the start.

As a compromise, Ang arranged for IBC-13 to just become part of the PBA consortium in name, for the simple reason that it was demanded by the PBA itself.

Under an internal arrangement among MBC-4, IBC-13 and Summit, IBC-13 actually only sold airtime to Summit, insured income, in short.

***

PAIRIN Summit could not deliver, Carranza did what he has never done to any other blockimer of IBC-13. He scrapped the airing of the PBA games just like that.

Just how the longtime employees of IBC-13 can now repair the damage to their company's reputation, is not Carranza's problem anymore. That's the PCSO for you!

Philhealth: Fight over doctors' bills

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Manuel C. General

P50,450 to P195 taken on the payment of professional fees are changing the traditional relationship between doctor and patients. I am not sure the change is for the better.

If you check in as a hospital, the admission clerk asks you whether or not you are a member of Philhealth. If you are, and you have your ID card or proof in you are given two Philhealth forms. Before you can go home, you, the doctor, and the hospital will have to fill up those forms and submit them to the billing section.

Philhealth's benefits are quite modest. At best, they are no more than 20 percent of your total hospital and doctor's bills. You have to cough up the 80 percent balance out of your own pocket. Or if you have some other insurance policy like an HMO, you may also get the balance from there.

The final bill computed by the billing section is net of Philhealth benefits for hospital services. If class or best you stay you will compute. You can also arrange with your doctor beforehand so that the corresponding Philhealth benefit be deducted from the professional fee.

In due course, the hospital sends the rest forms to Philhealth.

Effectively, the hospital is filing a claim on your behalf. Usually within 60 days, Philhealth pays the hospital and the doctor under separate claims.

You can also choose to pay all the hospital and doctor's bills gross of any Philhealth benefits. In which case you may file your claims directly with Philhealth. To support your claim, you have to submit the two forms duly filled up by you, the hospital and the doctor. The forms will then include statements from the hospital and the doctor waiving their rights to any Philhealth payments. The Philhealth check will be in your name.

Problems crop up when there is no clear understanding between doctor and patient on how the professional fee will be paid. As a rule, doctors do not like asking patients to sign letters or agreements on how the Philhealth benefits will be taken into account in the professional fee.

This is particularly true in emergency cases where the doctor treats the patient right away and discusses the fee later. Also in emergency cases and in the patient's plea, the doctor accepts the Philhealth benefit as the final professional fee. The doctor takes a risk here because there is always the possibility that Philhealth might turn down the patient's claim.

Recently, my daughter Clarissa, an accelerated-eight, and her favorite surgeon, Jane, had a misunderstanding with a patient. After performing a Caesarian operation, Jane issued a receipt for P35,000 covering "professional fees." Carmen's share was P3,000. In this case, the checks from Philhealth arrived. Jane's check was for P1,800.

The patient claimed that the check, and that of Jane, should have gone to her. She said it was her understanding that, having already paid P20,000, all Philhealth benefits would be hers. She filed a complaint at Philhealth.

Initially Clarissa and Jane felt like passing the checks on to the patient just to get rid of her. On second thought, they decided to explain to Philhealth Legal that their fee was way below the norm for Caesarian they took the Philhealth benefits. Their next hospital records to back them up.

The case is still pending, but they are confident that the complaint will be dismissed.

Wise. Clarissa has a form, drafted by her lawyer, that she will ask every paying patient to sign before an operation. She feels and because she feels the professional relationship between doctors and patients has just turned into a business.

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Why the SPV Law isn't working

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

JUST about this time last year, we were hearing the passage of the long-pending bill that provided incentives for the establishment of asset management companies (AMCs), also known as asset recovery companies (ARCs), or special purpose (asset) vehicles (SPVs) or SPCs).

There are third party entities set up to relieve the banks of assets that do not earn them anything—thus the term non-performing assets or NPAs.

All over the region, the Asian financial crisis had left us to make billions in defaults of bank loans and foreclosed properties in the hands of the banks, representing huge amounts of idle, unproductive resources.

The SPV Law was widely expected to provide the ailing banking industry an much needed shot in the arm, thereby reviving the rest of the economy which feeds feasible funds for new investments.

Months after the enactment of the SPV Law and completion of its implementing guidelines by the Bangko Sentral, the response from the banks has been, well, underwhelming.

For consulting I did was presented as an expert economic assessor and widely expected to be the awarded sure for a dragnet financial sector, bankers now seem all but chilled about their own assets.

It seems all the anticipation for the law before its passage was misplaced. What went wrong?

SPV and NPAs: The theory

NPAs come in two forms. Non-performing loans (NPLs) are bank loans that are more or less current but are considered with collateral, usually in properties, whose borrowers have stopped servicing due to financial difficulties. Banks hang on to these with the hope that the distressed companies can still recover and eventually repay the loans, especially if a loan restructuring agreement can be reached with the borrowers.

Real and other properties owned and acquired (Reopos) are properties that end up in the possession of the banks after foreclosing on a loan and taking possession of the collateral.

Understandably, such properties may be voluntarily surrendered to the bank by a defaulting borrower as outright payment under what's called a dation en pago agreement.

Both NPLs and Reopos tie up huge chunks of bank assets unproductively, each making up roughly half of the total NPAs currently in the economy, which is about 20 percent of bank assets.

The theory behind the SPV Law is that if banks do not have to keep these NPAs in their books and can dispose of them through outright sale, banks would have much more funds available for lending and other income-generating activities.

By improving the financial position of the banks, they in turn are better able to service the financing needs of the economy, the economy is reinvigorated and everyone benefits.

In Indonesia and Thailand, the government set up the AMC directly, and bought up the banks' NPLs with taxpayers' money.

The banks' books were cleaned up almost overnight, and this is a major reason why their economies have bounced back very quickly. Our own government, while initially reviving previous practices and practices budget deficit, obviously cannot afford this route.

The policy has been to invite AMCs or SPVs to be set up by the private sector. Thus, the SPV Law sought to make it attractive for SPVs to be set up, both on the part of those who would invest in such entities, and on the part of the banks who would sell their NPLs to these SPVs.

This is achieved through various tax breaks and incentives provided on the financial transactions between banks and the SPVs.

Devil in the details

Alas, good intentions are all too often foiled up by our government's propensity for over-regulation and a general tendency to design rules from an attitude of distrust.

It appears that the implementing guidelines issued by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) are so restrictive as to virtually eliminate the attractiveness to banks of dealing with an SPV. My banker friends explain to me that under the rules put in place by the BSP to implement the law, it hardly makes sense for a bank to go the SPV route.

Among the offending provisions is the requirement that provisions for loan losses remain attached to an NPL, even after its transfer to an SPV in exchange (whether wholly or partly) for a financial instrument, usually a subordinated debt.

A loan loss provision is a portion of the bank's income that the BSP requires a bank to set aside to cover for the possibility that a questionable loan cannot be collected. In providing for the quality of the loan, BSP may require a bank to set aside 10, 25 or 150 percent of a loan's face value as loan loss provision.

While it is designed to have a bank to protect itself from being destabilized by a loan default, it is also a substantial cost to the bank as it ties up income.

As this kind of losses then, the SPV has the bad loan either by issuing a small part it cash (say 30 percent of the face value) and the remainder paid with a promissory note to pay cash over time if the bad loan is collected or other value-based instrument.

But here's the clincher: the bank also has to provide loan loss provisions for the similar face value of the subordinated debt, staggered over a period of time (the Law says five years) until fully secured to begin with. All this makes it rather costly, and downright unattractive, for a bank to even go into such a deal.

Better off without it

In fact, under these circumstances, a bank is better off with the non-performing loan and not the bad loan to the SPV at all. For a fully secured NPL, the required loan loss provision is just 10 percent. If it is foreclosed and turned into Repos, no income need even be touched as such provision up to the taxes.

And even if it cannot be sold beyond five years, the necessary provision would still be required would be 50 percent, as against 100 percent if sold to an SPV for subordinated debt, on top of the original provision that the BSP requires on the unsold assets.

In short, the only advantage the bank gets in selling an NPL to an SPV is the happened sight of having a lower NPL ratio, but the banks actually ends up with a worse financial position. The spirit is of a lower NPL ratio may be good, but the banks need cash.

No wonder the SPV Law isn't working. Comments welcome at chabito@yahoo.com

Market seen firming up

Meralco customers get ₱39.96M in discounts

By Rascel W. Domingo

THE INDUSTRIAL customers of Manila Electric Co. have enjoyed discounts on their electricity bills worth P39.96 million last August and September under a program aimed at boosting electricity consumption, a company official said.

Jesulito delos Reyes, head of Meralco's credit and customer unit, said in an interview that 830 companies availed themselves of the discounts in August while 90 companies opted out from the program in September.

Under the Special Program to Enhance Electricity Demand, Meralco's industrial customers could get a discount of as much as 72 centavos per kilowatt-hour for electricity consumed beyond their average monthly demand.

Of the total discount, 38 centavos was from the National Power Corp., 11 centavos from the National Transmission Corp. and 12 centavos from Meralco.

Discounts given out in August accounted for 28.8 million kilowatt-hours at P39.94 million while those in September covered 27.9 million kWh at P28.12 million.

Delos Reyes said August discounts were the cheapest applies only to the part of supply that is bought from Napocor, the regulated.

Consumer chat also led Iscon Bag from Special sets eligible under Phase 1 of the program, which covers customers with a minimum demand of 1,000 kilowatts.

"We expect to implement Phase 2 to customers with minimum demand of 800 kW in December," Delos Reyes said.

There are 226 Meralco customers eligible under Phase 1 and about 1,100 those qualified under Phase 2, she officials added.

LRTA seeks charter change

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LIGHT Rail Transit Authority has sought an amendment to its charter to allow it to increase its capitalization and cut down on interest expenses.

LRTA Administrator Teodoro Cruz Jr. said in an interview that the LRTA's original charter, Executive Order 603, had been amended some 20 years ago but has since remained at a low P2 billion.

"Our recommendation is to have a charter change to set an authorized capitalization of only P5 billion. Our earlier proposition was for our capitalization to be raised to P100 billion, but this was turned down by Congress," he told the business.

Cruz said the LRTA could opt for a debt-to-equity conversion that would also help ease the company's equity/loan ratio to as high as P450 billion, while bringing down its financial charges.

The LRTA counts its borrowings through the national government, instead of the government reducing additional cash into the railway authority to increase its capitalization, its debts could just be converted into equity.

"A debt-to-equity conversion can ease the LRTA into a P,000-billion company. This will then encourage private sector participation in our projects," Cruz said.

While the LRTA's debt-to-equity conversion proposal had yet to get approval, he said the Department of Budget and Management had already provided an initial P7 billion subsidy for the LRTA.

He said the DBM had approved the conversion of P7 billion worth of interest charges into government subsidy for the LRTA.

Since the creation of the LRTA in 1981, it had been posting revenues that were more than enough to cover its operational expenses, but hefty financial charges have kept LRTA in the red.

Last year, the LRTA generated more than P1.2 billion in net revenues. Its open wound at P990 million ballooned its financial charges were placed at P650 million.

As of the first half of this year, the LRTA's net revenue stood at P588 million, while open was pegged at P1.0 billion. Financial charges stood at P334 million.

Cruz said the LRTA would be more viable and more attractive to private sector investors if the government would approve the proposed debt-to-equity swap.

LRTA projects lined up for implementation include the P641-million LRT Line 1 South Extension and the P1.17-billion LRT Line 2 East Extension project.

SEC approves Philtrust's capital hike

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has approved the increase in the authorized capital of Philippine Trust Co. from P5 billion to P17 billion.

Philtrust Bank, largely owned by newspaper publisher Emilio Yap, also increased its subscribed capital to P4.3 billion and paid-up capital to P3.081 billion.

In a recent disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the bank said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas had also approved the capital increase.

The bank said that in line with the increase in authorized capital, 4,140,50 percent stock dividend or 216.3 million shares listed on the company's subscribed and outstanding shares as of Sept. 15 this year, was declared.

Out of the additional P12 billion increase, 25 percent or P3 billion have been subscribed. P2.185 billion of which were fully paid by way of stock dividends.

As of the third quarter of this year, Philtrust reported total assets of P17 billion and a capital base of P4.19 billion. Its deposits amounted to P11.8 billion and net loans reached P13.8 billion.

GOINGS-ON

Security Bank's new branch

SECURITY Bank's Ayala Alabang branch will open its doors for business starting today.

Located on Madrigal Avenue, the 114th branch of Security Bank is a full-service unit slated to cater to the surrounding business and residential villages.

The Security opening will have a ceremony but full service will already be at full swing, said Aileen Fernandez, senior vice president for consumer banking.

The inaugural will be presented by a convoy of BMW cars driving around the community for 45 minutes. Security Bank has a financing tie-up with BMW.

SMC units bag awards

San Miguel Corp.'s packaging subsidiaries gained distinction for excellence from key regional trade associations recently.

San Miguel Pemsa Packaging Corp. won the Philippine Award for Packaging Excellence of the Packaging Institute of the Philippines, while Highpak International Corp. also bagged the Print Excellence 2003 Awards of the Printing Industry Association of the Philippines.

For the fourth consecutive year, San Miguel Pemsa took home the Platinum Award, considered the Oscars of the Philippine packaging industry, with its aquaculture entry for client Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc.

Pemsa also garnered qualifier for the Worldskills Packaging Competition, which will be held next year.

Highpak also won in the Flexible Printing category for the prize it received for Mr. Donnel Flexible Processing Mfr.

DTI's livelihood program

AFTER five consecutive months, the Department of Trade and Industry brings the Micro-go to Kabuhayan Program to the communities of Barangay San Agustin, Cupe, Sta. Monica, Magkawayan Bayan and Bonifacio Proper in San Juan City.

Some 200 retail and kiosk owners will join the livelihood program where they will be taught how to make sugar scrub cookies. The DBP foundation, chaired by Security Bank, has agreed to provide each kabuhayan marketing materials and accessories in packaging the products.

The Micro-go! to Kabuhayan is a market-based DTI program and that aims to open entrepreneurial opportunities for the urban poor and at the same time provide business to retailers across Metro Manila while profits. Entrepreneurial new livelihood products were chosen because these products do not require complex design, technology or sophisticated machines and the like to process, considered for competitiveness. Thereby giving the livelihood endeavors of these communities a fighting chance for market acceptance.

Gov't readies sale of $300M worth of treasury bonds

By Clarissa S. Baizas

THE MACAPAGAL administration has tabbed seven foreign and local banks to submit underwriting proposals covering the sale of up to $300 million worth of short-term dollar-denominated government securities.

The proceeds from the sale of the dollar-denominated treasury bonds would form part of the planned cash reserves of $2 billion, which would be used to finance all expenses slated next year.

The government earlier would need about $1.8 billion next year, and has already raised about $800 million last month from the sale of $1.05 billion worth of long-term global bonds.

"The minimum amount for the deal is $ 150 million but the government could [raise] as much as $300 million," said a banking source. The bonds would be floated over the next two months.

The government has decided to borrow next year's requirements this year to avoid paying higher interest rates in the country move closer to the May presidential polls.

Invited to submit underwriting bids for the dollar treasuries include local groups First Metro Investment Corp. and the Land Bank of the Philippines and foreign investment banks Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, ING, and Standard Chartered Bank.

Of the seven underwriters, sources said Metrobank affiliate First Metro and RCBC were strong contenders.

The first and only time the government sold dollar treasuries was in December 2001 through Citibank affiliate Citicorp Capital Phils.

The congress in interest rate of the one-to-three year dollar treasuries would carry a spread over the bench mark London Interbank Offered Rate.

When the government sold $100-million worth of one-year bonds in 2000, the spread was 2.5 percentage points over one-year Libor.

Banks Sourcing Philippine Government Dollar Instruments and investors subscription preferred that the national government focuses its 2004 requirements area while rates are reasonable.

DTI cautions local firms against raising cement prices

By Michelle V. Rono

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has warned local cement manufacturers that it might be forced to cut down its tariff protection against cement imports due to reports that local cement prices have been increasing.

The DTI suspected that some cement firms have been using the safeguard measure to jack up prices of local cement just after they were provided protection against foreign competitors.

The DTI imposed starting June this year a safeguard duty of P20.00 per 50-kilogram bag of imported cement in response to the appeal from cement cement manufacturing firms that claimed to have been severely affected by the entry of cheaper imported cement.

According to Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II, the DTI has embarked on a nationwide review of cement prices and found that the selling prices in some areas have increased from Ll04 of 93 per bag to a high of P 12 per bag from August to October.

According to the Trade Department, the DTI's price monitoring team, the average price of cement nationwide increased from P 114 in August to P 118 in October. In the Ilocandia Capital Region, meanwhile, the price of cement went up by 53 from P5.07 to P 8.10.

He said, however, that the DTI would still study other factors that could have possibly affected the prices of cement—such as raised costs of fuel and electricity—before it decides to withdraw the safeguard measure.

Roxas said he DTI has been holding consultations with various sectors to come up with a fair judgment on the recorded increases in cement prices were justified.

Local banks still dominant, says Moody's

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE DOMINANCE of the country's large universal banks remains unchallenged despite the entry of foreign competition and the growth of smaller domestic banks, a banking analyst of international ratings firm Moody's said.

Analyst John Thain noted that while foreign competition was strong, it remains limited because foreign players often switch resources to other markets that better suit their risk-reward preferences.

The four aggressive local banks that have posted a "dram" growth, on the other hand, were not expected to pose a significant threat to the bigger banks since they have smaller assets and networks.

"The strong network of branches of the big banks is a big advantage in a market where physical reach is likely to remain very important at least for the next few years," Thain said.

The country's largest banks include the Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co., Bank of the Philippine Islands and Equitable PCI Bank.

Interest income, however, has been growing as Union Bank of the Philippines, Union Banking Corp. and Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

The first two have posted over P2 billion in net income in the first nine months of this year to register some of the highest return on equity ratios in the industry.

Meanwhile, Thain said that the asset quality picture of the Philippine banking industry has not significantly improved.

Corn Q4 output to soar by 30%

THE COUNTRY'S corn production is expected to soar 30.2 percent in the fourth quarter, pushing overall output to 9.61 million metric tons for the entire year, Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. said.

While production between July and September this year plunged 4.9 percent to 1.66 million MT largely due to Typhoons Harurot which punished key corn areas in Luzon, off-season plantings in Cagayan Valley and early-cropping in Mindanao yielded good harvests to compensate for the third quarter loss, he said.

As a result, the country's corn output is expected to increase by almost 200,000 MT to 4.61 million MT this year, or 4.7% percent more than the 4.32 million MT registered in 2000.

"Corn farmers managed to recover because of timely government intervention, including the release of calamity funds for seed procurement and loan restructuring by Quedancor for Cagayan Valley farmers who had previous production loan borrowings," Lorenzo said.

The DA chief said that despite said year typhoons which wiped out patterned harvest of up to 200,000 MT in the corn growing areas of Cagayan Valley and the Cordillera, farmers' ability to immediately rise above the disaster brought positive sentiment toward national.

Lorenzo said good corn prices and favorable weather conditions in the second semesters also encouraged farmers to plant to more areas, allowing corn output to improve significantly.

He noted that early cropping in South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City (Soccsksen) also compensated for the crop losses caused by typhoons.

This year's higher output was also attributed to the intensified seed dispersal program of the government since early 2001, which allowed seeds yield, notably the white variety, to improve to 1.81 metric tons per hectare this year from 1.61 levels.

"We are getting headway in promoting hybrid and certified corn seed varieties," Lorenzo said.

Arts & Design LIFESTYLE

Editor Chele Banal-Formoso
Associate Editor Lito Zulueta

'Himala' gets stage makeover

Tanghalang Pilipino resurrects the controversial 1980s movie as a musical. Will the miracle strike twice?

By Cora Llanza
Correspondent

"*BAKIT mga himala? Kailangan bang mga himala? Bakit tanggapin-paliwanagin ang mga tao ng himala?*"

So asks the beleaguered, swallowed film-maker Orly (Eladio Pamintuan) at the end of the theater-invented, based on the 1980s classic movie that starred Nora Aunor and was directed by the late master Ishmael Bernal.

The Tanghalang Pilipino (TP) production is being helmed by stage veteran Amy Tapia-in and non-relative newcomer Mae Bautista as the latter-prophetess Elsa. However, Ricky Lee has reserved to transform his screenplay into a dramatic script.

Ninety percent of the storyline and theme remains intact, and it might not be a spoiler to narrate the scenes which have embedded in the minds of millions of Filipinos who had seen the award-winning controversial movie.

A lonely outcast, Elsa, in whom the town's suffering rises, hankers to the desolate South, claims to have seen visions of the Blessed Mary. She proves her woe to spirituality with scores of healing. Crowds line up, from the desperate poor to the cynic bourgeois, to witness a miracle or secretly renew their faith.

But what drives the movie's suspension is if, as it promises of better times, if only the people believe.

Then tragedy strikes, causing Elsa to lose her faith and question her mission. Ultimately she loses her life as well.

But some things change in the translation here: Elsa is mute.

Deceptively perhaps, but significant. In the original, Elsa scans her audiences—celluloid and real life alike—by declaring, "Naniniwala ba sila? Mga puso ng tao ang himala?"

In this stage version, the once skeptical filmmaker who comes to grips with his own sanity famously begins to understand "Then there are some things you can't explain. The supernatural exists," explains Pamintuan. "The question at the end then turns to *Ano ba ang himala?* Whatever the religion, in every part of the world, a miracle happens, but why does it happen? What is it for? Why do people need a miracle?"

Disturbing

The answers may prove to be more disturbing than the questions, says Bayot, who is filling in horror's big shoes. Unproven people bringing cures to life and limb will believe anything or take drastic measures just to save themselves.

"In horror Ricky's words, 'Sa panahon na ito ng sarbey, at iba-iba ng pinuk ng isip,' it had not existed in the era of Cinema One two years. The level was dry. Ayun mong pagsasalubong, nagsasama ang mga tao. Umaasa na lang ang marami. Iyong iba, kumakapit sa kahit ano sa Diyos sa sila ang lang nasa-hahagit ng abot. Once the apparition happens, and Elsa claims to have seen the Blessed Mother and starts healing, the people cling to her because they think she's close to God.

"During hard times, we are all searching for somebody who is out to save us, whether he be a martyr-idol, a politician, superhero, a soap opera or a game show. We look for salvation, whether it be financial, political or religious."

Bayot, who found her craft in TP and Philippine Centerstage productions, was unrehearsedly apprehensive at assuming the role that had been identified forever with Aunor.

"Siyempre, natakot ako. How can any actress equal or surpass what she did?"

Aunor played Elsa as a silent, mystical, if sensitive existence. The actress' trademark measure of suffering and strength was calculated to bring in the audience's sympathy.

Bayot gives her own interpretation: "She may be a pretended liar but she's not stupid. Hindi rin siya madaldal. How can anyone who's not intelligent connect that whole thing? The musical shows her development from a self-proclaimed innocent to a wily person on two subsidies."

Eventually, she becomes susceptible to all the

GMA Sharon as the saloon owner Maria with Kontrabida-based actor Eladio Pamintuan as the filmmaker Orly

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Rustan's
Completes The Season

Piano concerto journey completes its 100th performance

By Jeremie C. Hila
Contributor

THE ROMANTIC Piano Concerto Journey of Ingrid Xulo Santamaria and Reynaldo Reyes had its 100th performance during the opening of the Parmar de Arte (Museum of Arts) Piano Museum at the Santamaria residence in Magallanes Village.

The only one in the country, the museum showcases famous musical pieces of miniature pianos originally owned by the family's maternal lineage in Cuba. Stored are pianos loaned to Gonzagyn, Senita B. Fleitando, Dr. Victoria M.S. Powell, represented by Dona Mendiondo, Antares Andrade, and Jose Custodio Escudero, to name a few. An intimate group of friends was first to view the collection in its new location.

The museum is dedicated to Santamaria's parents, the late Salvador Julia, considered a Renaissance man by his daughter, and Pilar Barrera Julia, her first piano teacher, and to Maestro Reynaldo Reyes, for "life-time owning."

The collection was transferred to Manila at Santamaria's own home for the city after successfully completing the 10-year task of developing the Cebu PATS Symphony Orchestra (CPSO), which she started in 1991.

The eccentric musical program opened with an unquestionably unusual eclectic concert—consisting of movements from three well-loved pieces: the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1 in B Flat Minor, Op. 23; the second movement of Beethoven's Concerto No. 3 in E Flat Major, Op. 73 ("Emperor"); and the first movement of Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18.

Announcers performed the performance with brief remarks, saying it was done for an intimate group of "working friends." It was markedly different from the pair's usual performances all over the country attended by thousands of listeners. Prof. Reyes gave significant comments made listening easy.

The show opened the new piano museum in the Santamaria residence

REYNALDO Reyes

INGRID Xulo Santamaria

Alfredo Mendiola, concert impresario, said the concerts would resume in January 2004. Already it is "Islands Tour" as the date will be brought to Marinduque, Mindoro, Batanes, Aklan and Cagayan.

Asian choristers

Meanwhile, the Asian Youth Singing Ambassadors (AYSA), a talent chorus to be composed of young choristers from Asia, was launched recently. The choir is currently composed of 15 members from different churches affiliated with the Manila Broadcasting Network. Eventually it will have 25 members, with the rest coming from other parts of Asia.

Each participating country will conduct its own selection. Andrea G. Mendiondo, National Artist for Music and founding choirmaster of the instrumentally famed Philippine Madrigal Singers, will make the final selection.

The AYSA, according to Mendiondo, aims to reach out to the youth through music and to promote regional unity. The choir was organized only four months ago and it still has a long way to go. Members are now in auditions, with only about seven having had some choir experience.

Presently on apprentice work, Mendiondo said the group was disciplined and responded well to instruction. It now has a good grasp of what a good choral sound was. Rehearsals are rigorous, consisting of two sessions of more than two hours each every week.

In support of the project, the Asian Youth Singing Ambassadors Foundation Inc. was set up with Ex. Imee R. Tejedor Jr. as president. Benavision said it sees Tejedor as the logical fit for the job.

The Asian Youth Orchestra (AYO) and the Philippine Madrigal Singers inspired the formation of the AYSA. The launching also served as a fund-raiser to finance the conduct of auditions in other parts of Asia.

During the lunch, the choir performed 10 songs consisting of spirituals, religious and modern pieces.

THE IMPERIAL citadel of Hue in Vietnam

A tour of some of humankind's greatest achievements

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

We live in a diverse, beautiful and continually changing world. Geologic and climatic movement over millions of years definitely shape our planet. The picturesque collision of the continents raised great mountain ranges, carved out deep canyons that created great glaciers and also connected lands of land.

This relentless movement provided our planet with a continually shifting stage that allowed evolution to generate a long line of plants and animals, whose survivors we now see around us. What an amazing assemblage of nature and culture we exist in today.

Some creatures are the farming of our planet took over three million years, making humans relative newcomers. Over the past 10,000 years, they increasingly set their mark on nature, changing the world so that their needs could be met. Forests gave way to farmland and pastures. Grazing animal and plant species were domesticated to serve people. First they built settlements, then considerable cities and, later, vast urban areas.

After combing quite a mark on the planet, humankind is now pairing the consequences he's not doing so with more respect. Today we are faced with the task of managing the fragile natural and cultural balance to ensure the future of our planet. Conservation is not the success of just a few. It is upheld necessity.

Through the World Heritage Convention, likewise United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) nations recognize this natural or cultural balance in the world while ensuring the preservation of threatened cultural treasures built by humankind.

Nations implement the convention, an international treaty ratified to over 30 years ago and now up to the by over 150 countries. The convention primarily guards against the "direct" century or disappearance of the cultural or cultural heritage that could have a harmful impact on the nature of the heritage of all countries in the world."

The world's leading mechanism for the conservation of natural and cultural patrimony, it sets guidelines and procedures to be followed in the conservation and maintenance of properties inscribed in the World Heritage List.

Through the World Heritage Committee, Unesco maintains constant watch over 750 places all over the world listed as World Heritage sites. There are unique and special sites identified in the World Heritage Convention as "parts of the cultural or natural heritage that are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of humankind as a whole."

Once inscribed in the World Heritage List full-time participation categories, cultural and natural.

Cultural sites are man-made structures that exhibit the highest artistic achievements of man. Destruction of any of these sites means an irreplaceable void in the patrimony of humankind. Sites inscribed in the category include the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Wall of China, the Parthenon of Greece and the entire Vatican City in Rome.

Natural sites are places of extreme natural beauty that show a significant phase in the evolution of the earth, or sites that must be preserved to maintain the world ecological balance. Inscribed in the World Heritage list as natural sites are the Grand Canyon in the United States, the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

Nine Philippine sites are inscribed in the World Heritage List. The two cultural sites are Tubbataha Reef National Park and Puerto Princesa Underground River, both in Palawan province. Cultural sites are the Baroque Churches of the Philippines (a multiple site of four churches), four sections in Intramuros, the churches of Paoay in Ilocos Norte, Sta. Maria in Ilocos Sur, and Miagao in Iloilo), the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras and the historic town of Vigan. In late 2003, the Philippines is nominating a sixth property, the Batanes multiphase and Cagayan Archaeological Landscape for inscription in the World Heritage List.

The Philippines educational system has taught us to look westward rather than toward our neighbors, so ours to Asia remains a mystery to many Filipinos who do not realize the relevance the places have to our own culture.

Thailand has great achievements in preserving its cultural treasures, particularly the ancient city of Sukhothai. In 1979, the Thai government restored/reconstructed numerous Hindu and... today, the ancient city is a visual feast of monumental stone carved among rolling green hills.

Along the banks of the Perfumed River, the Imperial Citadel of Hue in Vietnam was once the feudal political and cultural center of the country. Among the royal architectural works are the Royal Palace, pagodas, royal tombs and pavilions for government officials.

Without question, the jewel of Asian heritage is the collection of temples in Angkor, listing monuments to the former grandeur of the Khmer empire. Founded in the 9th century, the first step at Angkor covers almost 200 sq. km. Filled with temples, other remnants of the lost civilization are scattered within the broad area, including a massive irrigation system that brought waters for residents and to support agriculture.

Experiencing World Heritage places and times is a gentleman's club, with proper preservation measures in place, the sites that form the collective patrimony of humankind will survive into the next generations.

Old Travel and Tours inaugurates a three-continent tour of Asian World Heritage Sites that start from the Philippines. The "Four Kingdoms World Heritage Tour" touches World Heritage sites—the imperial towns of Luang Prabang in Laos and Hue in Vietnam, the leading temple Hoi An in Vietnam, the temple ruins of Sukhothai in Thailand and the mystical temples of Angkor in Cambodia. Departures are regularly scheduled between November 2003 and March 2004. Contact G&S Travel at 8166845, 8159505 and 8172307.

E-mail the author at ajfvillalon@hotmail.com.

UNPARALLELED Angkor Wat in Cambodia, a World Heritage site

THE COLLABORATORS of "Himala" the musical (from left) playwright and lyricist Rony Lee; composer, musical director and lyricist Vince R. de Jesus; director Suzy Tejuco and production designer Gino Gonzales

THE WOMEN of "Himala." (from left) Cynthia Culip-Sison as the religious Chayong, Alwina as the former prostitute Nimia and May Bayle as the healer and visionary Elsa

BONG Revilla's journeys started as Kenang Bagani

'Himala' gets stage makeover

From page C1

and, to subset, in my opinion, she would have lost her faith in the Virgin Mary long before the end, when she had become too proud."

Pretty soon, parent issues were into play, and the line between evangelism and puppet Mary. A media frenzy pulls prophetess and town people into the exacting glare of the limelight.

As a cult of devotees springs around Elsa, the Church, anxious of losing its flock, arrives to probe and perhaps stop the phenomenon.

Design and music

A massive set brings the audience right into the heart of the drama with all its religious underpinnings and enduring socio-dichotomies.

Designed by Gino Gonzalez, panels could roll to endow the terrain within the stage of the 200-seater Tanghalang Ilaw sa. The blockiness of the forms can sublimate and warp, as the Lutz spiritual novena theater and deduce it from its shapes.

As the production design's intimacy explores the panoramic scenes in the movie, Vince de Jesus' music and lyrics voice out the sentiments and thoughts of the seven (and the leading player).

"I eventually came up with themes that are based on the characters' emotions. Melody themes emerge that sing of love, pain, passion, rage, doom and the whole gamut of emotions that the characters express throughout the musical," says the composer. "I was the very source of the fact that the musical should have its own distinct sound. Not pop, not Broadway, not operatic. The songs should breathe life into the characters, extend the emotional thread of the play, underscore the meanings of the text and reinforce the space and the rhythms of the material."

The music is undeniably emotive and passionate, chronicling the twists and turns in the town, from the closing of the last cabaret to the dawn of revelation.

The comic, light numbers are few and far between, like the one that features Elsa being given a quick glamorous make-over usually of the countess.

Ultimately, says Dr. Arao, "Himala" the musical focuses on man's search to believe in something, and the consequences that can result from it. "Despite send of bold on to religion, love or money, it shows how good people—in their search for love, acceptance and happiness—go wrong. How blind faith destroys the most vital boldness. How greed corrodes the soul. How ambition can easily rule over love. It's about finding that moment of glory no matter what the cost."

If the search for a comedic counterpart that kind of grime, it returns us to the original question: "What are miracles for? Why do we need one? And are they worth the price?"

IPI, "Himala The Musical" runs at the CCP from Nov. 7-21. Call 8323661.

Mentors of teachers imbibe revolutionary spirit

By Chrel Rufino
Correspondent

THE LAST sessions for the year of the Education Revolution in Iloilo City, Oct. 13-18, were held at Ramon's in Guimbal. Fifty-five college deans and faculties of five teacher education institutions (TEIs) of Iloilo City met in one hall, and 65 principals, master teachers and school department heads of seven public high schools under the Iloilo City Schools Division in another.

Evelyn Mojillano, national coordinator for the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) and a professor at the University of the Philippines College of Education, and I went back and forth between the sessions. We were joined later by Nadia Bair of Bacolod and Dr. Celia Adriano, also a professor in the UP College of Education.

Anyone speakers: Dr. Lourdes Arañador, president of West Visayas State University (WVSU), and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) director Dr. Enrique Garcia said there was an urgent need for individuals to contribute in the community's life through gift of self and service. They said education and education were key to achieving this goal and challenged participants to start the change within themselves.

Represented in our session were WVSU, West Visayas College of Science and Technology (WVCST), University of Iloilo (UI), University of San Jose (USJ), University of San Carlos (USC), and University of San Agustin (USA). Observers were Emelita Salvado, Clarita Cruz and Leonarda Fernandez of the Department of Education Region XI; Edna Javier, Leticia Rocaberte, Pely Santamaria and Evangeline Batobal of Region I TEI; Jo Giselle Maldonana Oson Jiu, Rita Academy of Silvalon, Antique; and Ines Villanea of Ar competitors San Lorenzo.

REPRESENTATIVES of education institutions perform a rap number as part of their creative presentation.

Host coordinators

Sponsored by the FWWPP, the pilot session for TEIs had WVSU's Dr. Patricia Bilbao and Dr. Arañador as host coordinators.

The meetings of high school principals, elementary northern and school department heads was the third sponsored by Iloilo City's Local School Board under the leadership of superintendent Ida Escalada and her team of facilitators, and Jiingot Jessy Trenias. All 68 participants, and observers from Cotabato for Christ and Dingdid Davao, were fronted into "hand, face." The sessions were enriched with an exchange of experiences and learning.

The five-day meeting discussed classroom formation, Kindelo on Democracy (shifting from skin to cells inevitable), Building Relationships, New Teaching Methodologies, Active Learning Methods, Mentoring techniques of leading, guiding and listening, and Epistemic Design Integration.

Participants proudly presented their Action Plans and personal commitment to the Education Revolution to Dr. Maria "Batchie" Ginnayan, FWWPP president, during the valedictorian activities.

Real test

Now the real test of the impact of the Education Revolution will be in the implementation of the Action Plans.

"IT IS better to light just one little candle..." a song while each school pledges its commitment to pursue the Mentoring the Mentors program. FWWPP president Dr. Maria Lin Ayuyao looks on.

But we have seen how seriously participants take their plans during a visit to the Buenavista Elementary Public School and the Calaoy Elementary Public School headed by principals Gloria Javo and Judith Amoin, respectively. Both principals were among the first participants in the Mentoring the Mentors Program in May. Interviews with teachers showed that the Mentoring program was well in place to the school.

One teacher said, "Now, it is easy for us to tell each other, 'Ma'a ako mentality...' dapat ako ang mentoring ko."

Mentoring the Mentors Program has touched the hearts of 65 public school principals and, through them, their teachers, and representatives from five TEIs of Iloilo City. Armed with a renewed fervor and love for volunteerism for social transformation and with FWWPP's support, the prayer song "Heal Our Land" has found a good starting point.

E-mail: dchrel@hotmail.com.ph

Teacher education institutions attend Mentoring the Mentors session

CHORAL director-professor Feliz Calalang Jr. heads the choir.

UST Singers stage Philamlife concert

THE INTERNATIONALLY acclaimed University of Santo Tomas Singers will hold a concert titled Lead us Rio to the UST Singers on Nov. 7, 7 p.m. at the Philamlife Auditorium.

In line with Rotary International's theme Lead to Hand, Lead us Rio to the UST Singers is a fund-raising project of the Rotary Club of Mandaluyong, with its president, Dr. Ferdinand Calalang, under the Rotary International District 3900, headed by the district governor Antonio C. Pesayo.

The concert is for the benefit of the Rotary Club of Mandaluyong's various community projects in poverty alleviation, housing and literacy.

A decade of performing all over the world has brought glory and pride to the UST Singers, their university and the country led by professor Feliz Calalang Jr., the award-winning choral director, the group visited last year 12 European countries and 11 states in the US, winning the top prizes in four international choral competitions.

To the credits of 18 years in the international choral music scene, the UST Singers has earned the distinction as one of the best choirs in the world.

It was the Choir of the World title in 1995 in Wales, which made it the first and only Asian choir to claim the honor. It has also won more than 40 top prizes in competitions worldwide.

Ticket prices are P750, P500, P300 and P200, available at the Philamlife lobby. Call 3306272 or 0917-5130954.

Evening of faith and music with 'Waray' clergy at Meralco

PRIESTS from the Diocese of Calbayog in Samar present an "Evening of Faith, Music and Laughter" on 7 p.m., Nov. 8, at the Meralco Theater, Pasig City.

For the group's 10th concert, the repertoire includes a medley of Tagalog and Waray folksongs, Broadway and theater selection, and religious and inspirational pieces.

While no member is a professional singer or dancer, all the 48 active members of the Calbayog clergy will sing and dance.

The concert aims to help raise funds for the reconstruction of Immaculate Pastoral Center, built from the ashes of the old seminary that burned down on April 9, 2001. It is also a way of thanking benefactors and partners of the Calbayog church.

Call 4337044, 0918-9266570, 8317190, 0916-5778361, 4362770 local 4013, 0919-3502872, 8238791, 0916-7147931, 6434707, 0917-3455686.

BISHOP Jose S. Palma of Calbayog City singing in concert to raise funds for his diocese's pastoral center

"R&T of Power," by Anton Ibaloc

LIFESTYLE Arts & Design

Not so diminutive art

Eight exciting young artists try to break new ground

By Lito Zulueta

IS THE art of the young diminutive in vision and application? The tag of neat little scenes, social realism and conceptual art has pitted the young either in embracing agitprop or interpreting current events in the bland terrain of a conceit. Still others have stuck to the staples of landscapes, figures, still lifes and nudes, ending up in the no-ol' predicament.

The struggle to get out of the rut is evident in "Eight," the forthcoming show of eight young artists at the University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences. Most of the young names have won national art contests and exhibited either individually or jointly, and have thus come to be associated with a "signature style" or "theme." If there's such a thing in nascent talents.

Not that these young artists have become predictable. There's nothing wrong with being predictable if one wonders that predictability is consistency and maturity. But there is an exploratory talent that continues to probe and discover. There is a critical discernment in lines and colors.

The change is particularly evident in four artists who have exhibited widely and gained collectors this early—the Sumoots brothers, Jef and Marvin, Anton Ibaloc and Ben Romeo.

Jef and Marvin are members of the Sumoots clan of artists in Bukidnon, and their roots are in the folk arts. Jef paints highly stylized figures of women, angels and beasts along with icons of curiosity such as capiz windows, tropical foliage and magnificent moons, to captivating lambent, nearly dazzling colors.

But in this show, Jef Sumoots runs down the capiz windows to show his true artistic side. In "Pinoybayan," the window is broken, and a shard of capiz has the image of a child, while outside hangs a precarious garlic bulb set against the moon, preservation against the ghouls and vampires that perpetrate dislocations.

Dreamlike but trenchant

"Bantilang Pangarap" shows Jef's trademark dreamlike setting in the windowsill, gazing at the moon, but her wings are devised from the curves of Rizal figurette, a treatment very un-pastoral, dreamy and rooted in controversial hopes. The effect is dreamlike like most of Jef's painting, but this time, trenchant and pressing.

Marvin Sumoots is the foil to the other Sumoot's geniality. He's known for his brownout style and he puts that into good use in his take on Filipino folk Catholic practices, particularly Quiapo's Black Nazarene. The humor is mordantly black and quite shocking.

The compositions, too, reveal Marvin Sumoots's roots in theater. "Estong" is a parade-ensemble of faith and devotion, the mass of people throwing themselves at the Nazarene showing the claustrophobia that both stifles and terrifies the spirit. And in "Pasyon sa Ikalawang...," the Nazarene carries his cross by an oblivious company dragged by the usual clutter of dynamism of gadgetry.

Ben Romeo wields the magic of his chromatic-ecstatic colors again, but this time, he combines a lexicon of commentary and protest. He eschews the confusion of western forms and painting concerns in "Circus," in which human humiliation and urban plagues seem to conspire to engulf out the vitality of everyday existence. In "Family Tree," he connects current societal dysfunction with filial estrangement, a powerful analogy.

"TRIONFI and Ivory," by Ramon Fortes

Unprettifying a pretty painting genre

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE OLD Orion y Figuras got a makeover from our contemporary artists. Judging from the 20 artworks displayed currently in the Finale Gallery of Ayala Museum, we would say it was a radical treatment.

The exhibit "Lenya y Figuras: Contemporary Visions on Men and Identity" organized by Instituto Cervantes in cooperation with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, gathered some of our more gnarly young artists and their slightly older colleagues to present their modernistic and postmodern takes on heroes y figuras ("heroes and figures"). Such piece expresses the artist's current concerns, using the genres.

The information sheet defines this as "a genre of painting that makes clever use of imagery or form traits that often spell out the names of people who personify them," typically depicting "impressive tableaus of colorfully dressed men and women amidst flora and fauna with Philippine landscapes and city scenes in the background."

But while those (last flourished between 1845 and 1930 were mostly painted in watercolor on brown paper, the contemporary ones use a wide range of mediums, including enamel, modeling paste, photo transfer, wood, stone, metal, plastic, mirror.

The sheer variety of mixed media used by Alfredo Juan Aquilizan and his UP Los Baños humanities class on their collaborative piece "Iron Breast" boggles the mind. A whole wall is filled up with medicine forming the students' names: cigarettes, rolled paper pulp, hemp and jute ropes, copper and aluminum wires, rotten bulbs, metal and armored manikins, seashells, crayons, dried leaves and flowers, beads, paper clips, plastic strips, rice grains, manggo beans, pinnacle nuts, even a pair of briefs.

HARSO de Rivera's "Palomario Tacong"

The sheer variety of mixed media used boggles the mind

CRISTINA Tarnguchi's "Sanctification, Birhen Maria" No. 2

GERALDINE Javier's "In All Things"

Text and image

In "Dogma," Hiash Dexter Justiniani recasts some trickery (he has written I am god in thick red paint on a canvas, and an overhead light casts on the white wall in grey reflection that spells religion?

Probably the most radical is "Eve," a forbidding black structure to wood, acrylic and mixed media mounted on wheels, constructed by José Tence Ilan in collaboration with Danilo Bag-Ao. It represents a shame of Gothic spires, looking like the head of a nuclear missile, thus subliminally marrying sex and religion.

While the exhibit was aimed to "refer to the basic visual elements of hero y figuras, also is, the equal manifestation of image and text without necessarily adhering to the canons and aesthetics of the traditional genre"—Ilan's artwork has no text at all, nor to my human figures.

It does resemble a T, but the building form could have been a matchstick, a giant bullet?), or a bundle of primitive weapons such as sticks, spears, broad arrows or bazookers.

Elise Bocaco's "Walking Without Moving (The Illusion of Progress)," in acrylic and latex on canvas, does have a human figure, a red silhouette of a man against a black background—but this one doesn't have text, but seven hard pet on every foot else loses A on the space between the figure's circling legs.

In "In All Things," Geraldine Javier draws women in bodies with text and image at all. Her blood-red piece in paper and stained has numerous voids neatly arranged on form a symmetrical, dead-center cross on the smooth plain surface. It doesn't seem personal as he as you or us, just a red cross.

AMONDA Fajardo's "Mga Dibuhas ng Buhay"

Humor and content

But many of the pieces in the exhibit do keep up with the balancing of text and image, though in ways divergent from the 19th-century museum, if not contrary.

Among these are the hair bindings Rose's "(1 Drinks and a Woman," in mixed media; Brenda Fajardo's "Mga Dibuhas ng Buhay" acrylic on canvas; Ferdinand Montemayor's "Montagna," acrylic on canvas; Pete Roland Tumcutan's "Empty of Inspirations," oil on canvas; Mario de Rivera's "Palomario Tacong," modelling paste, enamel, acrylic; Dale Cristian Jungcal's "Gentrification, Birhen Maria" No. 2, oil on canvas; Hazel Babe Galang's "Progress Report 2000," mixed media.

Having closer in the original manner of the genre are the pieces of the older artists: Virgilio Arandia's "Babe," mixed media; Jonathan Ali saradon "Mag-anhon sa Ido," acrylic on canvas; and especially Edgar Talusan Fernandez's "Tabo Mo Ito and Kinilang Kalauhan," oil on canvas.

They distort only from the old heroes y figuras in that they have unjustified this pretty painting genre. The colors and images look bleaker, the contrasts darker, the artists being honest with their times.

SANTIAGO Bose's "12 Chinks and a Woman"

Quisumbing at West, Aquarellists at Le Soufflé

TEENAGE artist Juan Luna Orobia with exhibit his watercolors, all portraits, soft pastels and oils in his third one-man show at the lower level of Glorietta, Makati on Nov. 2-9. Now 16, Orobia comes from a family of artists; his mother, Fe Luna Orobia, is a niece of Juan Luna. Part of the prize pack will go to the Bataan of Grace. Call 5811812.

FORMER President Corazon Aquino (center) the member of Congressional Spouses, Inc., led by its president, Gina de Venecia, annual dinner Aquino Museum in Hacienda Luisita, Tarlac City, after the groundbreaking of Hares for Children. Photo shows Speaker Jun de Venecia, Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, Gloria Vidal Arroyo, Chit Bautista, Bebot Magsaysay and Marivilles Chiongbian.

STILL Life in water color by Mr. Hasegawa Jr. at Le Soufflé

BOOK of Southeast Asian art expert Marjorie Dixon be launched at Finale

WEST Gallery presents Christina Quisumbing Bautista's "Premonitions" on Nov. 8-18 at Glorietta 4, 2/L Ayala Center, Makati. The artist's mixed-media paintings are based on photos of powerlines as personal and social symbols.

LE SOUFFLÉ Bistro showcases the Aquarellists' 4th anniversary exhibit on Nov. 7-30 at 2/F Rhyolite Corporate Plaza, Paseo Road.

VISUAL ARTS

Original Quality, Pasay. Participating artists are Ito Barbosa, Robert Cayanga, Henri Gallardo, Raquel Lacsamana, Marina Ebarle, Joel Mendoza, Rene Magtalong, Nik Mauricio Jr., Ruben Mirafuente, Nick Paz and Roland Santos.

LUNAR Gallery presents Gael Aurelio's "Life Is Beautiful" until Nov. 14 at UP Diliman, Manila. Through the 14 artworks' titles culled from Psalm 139 of the Bible, the artist portrays her spiritual sensibility.

FINALE Art Gallery features contemporary artworks by well-known Southeast Asian artists on May 6-11 at the 2/L entry of The Podium. The paintings of Ang Kiukok, Arcadio Antonio, Cecilia Baldeo, Mario Mabaleng Santos, Manuel Baldemor, Norma Belleza, Jesse Pura Mateo, Sunarso, Ali Aspar, Rafael Ibrahim, Tisay Icasiano, Lolomel, Wee Shoo Leong, Goh Beng Swee and Earl Lucero have been added as members of Marjorie Dixon Diaz's "Masters" art collector and gallery owner Diaz will launch her book "Contemporary Southeast Asian Art" on Nov. 6.

THE CRISOLOGO Gallery showcases Ferdi Medina's "Pinilit Ferrifantasy" until Nov. 9 at the 4th level, Megamall A. Medina's art revolves around the themes of bondage, deception, authoritarianism, dominance and submission.

METROPOLITAN Museum of Manila presents "Kinetic/Optic: Contemporary Art from the Thel Islands" until Nov. 9 at the Cultural Galleries, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. This touring art exhibit brings together seven of the developments in contemporary art from the world's two richest islands of Bathurst and Melville.

KLIMAKE Evangelina de Manila features "Self-Love Before" by Fidel Rodrigo at Nov. 2-14. The Ed Lambas photographer presents the lives of people in different countries and cultures. Call 896-5816 loc. 3000 ext.

GM Art Center presents the works of Bernadette Abrahanic, Charlie Co and Dennis Rodolfo in "Rags-of: Black Artists in Asia Exhibition." The exhibit will be held on Dec. 3-14 at Megamall A.

GALLERIA de las Islas presents Eugene Bautista's "...in my mind's eyes" exhibition 1-3 at 91, Salcedo Center, 140 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila. The exhibit features Bautista's mixed works in acrylic on paper.

SOMO Artline features José Fernando's "Fragile" until Nov. 18 at 19 Mondial St., Bahay Building Subdivision, Pasay. Pasahaye. The artist focuses on the digital and globalized age wherein life is measured in points or breakpoints.

UP Vargas Museum showcases the artworks of Felizar de la Rosa, his contemporaries and former students at UP School of Fine Arts. The exhibit is ongoing until Jan. 15, 2004, at the Lobby.

Bencito exhibits journeys in Mark Bino Tito's artworks starting Nov. 23 at the second floor of S.E. Philippines Bldg., Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati. His paintings are rendered in charcoal and acrylic.

"TAGALOG," by Yvonne Belen

"PEACEKEEPER," by Rex Tatonghari

"FAMILY TREE," by Tres Ramos

"THE OFFERING," by Elsa Santos

"PATAWARIN Ka Kami..." by Bin Tamayo

Not so diminutive art

From page D1

In the works that he has become known for—oil-like textures in various stages of musical performances, brown Indian prowess or a world like Art Nouveau's...courage, romance and dreamlike. Set in a cinematic environment, he employs the same texture as figures of political representation.

In "Young Lava," the women is a manicurist with her arms and joints pulled either and clothes by the urban of foreign patrons. The hazy Philippine flag hovers in the background, seeming to fade and disappear.

Add to "Performance," Balao-Almazen his trademark theatrical interest. Art: Into a broken guitar, an abandoned and lost, like an impaired government. The nervous figure holds a bunch of wilted yellow flowers. "Our leaders call shots to put on a show as if everything is in order," the artist says.

The blurring of the lines that divide and impair the social issues is the subject of Ramon Forbes' works in the exhibit. In "Hump and Hurt," the bluff and brown grand prize winner notes that despite rural population, more and more people come the canal lines to intermarry. In "Checkmate," Forbes comments on gender stereotyping, noting sportsmanship how men and women have reverted rules in an effort at understanding and peace. How so Ono, Forbes' token are literally and appealing. His collection wasn't be disappointed. But while its easy have warrant to social commentary, his remarks as engaging enough.

Another Ibrosa grand prize winner, Yvonne Belen has more and more turned to oil from watercolor but has remained resistant to her one-dimensional drawings of children at play. She tackles child labor in her set of paintings in colors that are dark but brilliant. Her figures assuming the dimension of Socialistic social drawings that newer and around the modern eye. Her neo-primitivism has surely evolved in terms of depth and observation.

Rex Tatonghari is perhaps the most experimental iconographer in the group. In strangely realistic fashion, he invites open terrain archetypes, such as an hourglass and a wine cup, and crossbones them by subtle decorative touches, such as the sands of time growing roots and the wine cup growing vines. He is an artist who merits hint at sentiment and contradictions.

The religious iconography typical in his works makes Elisa Santos the most "devout" of the group. Surprisingly, his works are endowed with a hyperrealism that seems to insist that faith and religion is concrete, not disembodied. Most of the time, his figures are set against a stark universe of unremitting ascetic and cemetery dreads, prefiguring an existential conflict of sorts. He is a highly dramatic art.

Their incapacity and sense of adventure ensure that these eight young artists will continue to scrutinize and grow. Perhaps as a self-deprecating gesture, they have produced 200 miniature works for

"KINAKING Pangarap," by Jef Samsons

old and new collectors, part of the proceeds of which will go to the UST Journalism Survey to help fund activities to promote media ethics, migration journalism and the Catholic press. Those of the miniatures will be exhibited also in the UST Museum.)

As the name runs, however, they have profound big words that will form the core of the evening exhibit. The works show their evolving artistic visions. The artists also exhibit their generous heart. Each of them will donate a work to the UST collection.

"Eight" opens at the UST Museum on Nov. 8 at 4 p.m. Among in the show are The Store Shop, Mabuhay Graphics Inc. and The Artery. Call 5125400 or 0917.8569644.

'Ano kamo, Lomo?'

From page D1

albums, books to choose from.

The latest best seller is the Gwapinda Flash, a wonderful little toy of a flashlight that can attach to your camera's hotshoe and that makes it possible for you to use your pictures in whatever color you desire.

Lomo's local savant is cricket in "Lomo Kamo?," an exhibit featuring the creative of over 50 lomographers. Housed at the Bregate Café (corner Remedios and Jorge Bocobo Streets, Malate, Manila), the show runs until Oct. 28.

The diversity of Lomo proponents is plain to see here, if only for the creative ways by which each participant promotes their kitschy work. From the classic to the unconventional, from the cute to the creepy, Lomo practitioners are, without a doubt, a diverse lot. Whatever your tastes, more than a few gems are sure to appeal to you, either aesthetically or emotionally. Prepare to get bitten by the Lomo bug.

Subscribe to lomoinquisitor-lomogroups.com. For a quick Lomo fix, various products (including cameras ranging from just P3,000-P9,000) are available at UPD at 80 Aurelio St., Barangay Ashbon Hills, San Juan.

UPD is open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 12 to 8 p.m. Call 7228395 or 0917-3222836. E-mail info@lpd.com.ph@yahoo.com.

THE I.C.A. the mother of all courses, produces baby kitties with images such as this one, taken by Ian Rina Roman.

LOMOGRAPHER Jamie Arroyo sampling the fun possibilities of the Supersampler

'Ano kamo, Lomo?'

By Eduardo M. Enriquez
Contributor

LENINGRADSKIYE-TROMBONCHANCHESCE-OYEOYEDENENEL. With such a mouthful for a name, it's no surprise that this photographic phenomenon is better known as Lomo.

St. Petersburg, Russia, was the birthplace of the first Lomo camera, the Lomo Kompakt Automat, also the LC-A. Capable of producing excellent photos in all lighting conditions, the LC-A was initially designed as a spy camera. Its user-friendly versatility proved too appealing to remain a secret, however, and in 1992, the Lomographic Society (based in Vienna) introduced the LC-A to the world, resulting in enormous cult success.

Not surprisingly, Lomographers the world over began asking for more Lomo products. 1995 saw the introduction of the Actionsampler, which splits a second into four parts, resulting in four equally sized sequential shots, arranged in a grid in a single print. Next came the Supersampler, which, believe it or not, is powered by a spool instead of batteries! Like the Actionsampler, the Supersampler takes sequential shots, although these are arranged in four vertical or horizontal layers.

Due to Lomo's cult appeal and worldwide success, the Lomographic Society has been hard at work creating even more camera-related accessories in an attempt to whet the fanatic appetite of Lomophiles across the globe.

Aside from the Top 9 camera, which produces nine identical images as a 3x3 grid on a single print, and the Holga, which produces charming, square-format photos with a surprisingly minimal mechanism, there is also a growing range of Lomo products: globo's tips,